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**Henotheism in Orphic sources
origins, development and reception**

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Henotheism in Orphic Sources

Origins, Development and Reception

Submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Classics
at King's College London

Anna Lucia Furlan

Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the theme of divine uniqueness and unity within the polytheistic structures of the Ancient Greek world, focusing on what is referred to as 'Orphism', exploring the relevant sources and examining its development from the Classical period through Hellenistic Judaism and into the Christian era. In this project I have looked at different sources linked to Orphism which present a divine figure that emerges from the plurality of a polytheistic structure and appears to acquire the status of a 'one' god (separate and complete). To do so, I have also analysed the Christian reception of these sources, since many Christian authors quote them with different points of view and levels of appreciation. Key works include pseudo-Justin's *De monarchia* and *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, Clement's *Protrepticus* and *Stromateis*, Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* and the *Theosophia Tubingensis*.

By investigating these sources, including variously dated fragments such as the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* and *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 19, 20, I have traced the development of this topic in successive historical periods and environments, an example of which is to be found in the poem known as *Hieros Logos* composed in Alexandria in Egypt within Hellenistic Judaism around the II century BCE, which imitates an Orphic *Hieros Logos*.

This thesis contributes a new approach to the theme of Greek henotheism and to the study of the divine figure in Orphism, drawing attention to the historical, literary and cultural relevance of the sources, making use of a comparative approach. Thanks to the contribution of the Cognitive Studies of religion this project will primarily demonstrate that it is possible to find henotheistic tendencies in Orphic sources and how these texts are intertwined with other philosophical and religious ideas. The analysis of the aforementioned selected texts will reframe and improve our understanding of part of the Orphic literary corpus, showing the reader how these literary sources can inform us about the reflection on and devotion to a 'one god' in Greek religion, and especially in Orphic manifestations.

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Ithaka

By C. P. Cavafy

Edited by Anthony Hirst

Translated by E. Sachperoglou

[...]

Ἡ Ἰθάκη σ' ἔδωσε τ' ὠραῖο ταξεῖδι.
Χωρὶς αὐτὴν δὲν θάβγαινες στὸν δρόμο.
Ἄλλα δὲν ἔχει νὰ σὲ δώσει πιά.
Κι ἂν πτωχικὴ τὴν βρεῖς, ἡ Ἰθάκη δὲν σὲ γέλασε.
Ἔτσι σοφὸς ποῦ ἔγινες, μὲ τόση πείρα,
ἤδη θὰ τὸ κατάλαβες ἡ Ἰθάκη τὶ σημαίνουν.

[...]

*Ithaca gave you the wondrous voyage:
without her you'd never have set out.
But she has nothing to give you any more.
If then you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.
As wise as you've become, with such experience, by now
you will have come to know what Ithacas really mean.*

For Costantino, Elio and Mariuccia.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the theme of divine uniqueness and unity within the polytheistic structures of the Ancient Greek world, focusing on what is referred to as 'Orphism', exploring the relevant sources and examining its development from the Classical period through Hellenistic Judaism and into the Christian reception. To do so, I will make use of the term 'henotheism' - a relatively modern coinage derived from the union of the words ἓν 'one' and θεός 'god', and discussed in the first section of the thesis - to refer to the aforementioned religious phenomenon in which one divine entity, emerging from the plural gradation of a polytheistic structure, gains a particular importance and becomes the centre of a specific cult.

Furthermore, distinguishing between more 'intuitive' and non-committal beliefs ('intuitive beliefs', 'factual intuitions') and more deliberate 'reflective' beliefs (the result of intellectual activity and reflection on divine agents) using contributions from cognitive studies of religion has proved to be a helpful and fruitful way to approach the study of Orphic henotheistic texts.¹ The crucial aspect of this investigation is indeed the intertwining of its historical-comparative and cognitive approaches, with the ultimate aim of casting light on historical and religious features of one particular side of Greek religion (i.e. henotheism). The examination of this religious phenomenon will focus on Orphic texts drawing attention to the historical background of the sources, as well as their cultural relevance, reflecting on if and how it is possible to talk about henotheism in selected Orphic sources and if this is distinct from other philosophical and religious ideas. The cultural context in which Orphic

¹ Single inverted commas should be used when referring to 'intuitive' and 'reflective' beliefs as a methodological precaution. However, as I often use these terms throughout the dissertation and for ease of reading, I will henceforth dispense with them although always keeping in mind this theoretical *caveat*.

cult activity took place, along with an understanding of how Orphic texts and ideas were known and received by people from different places and times, will also be explored throughout the analysis, in order to place the examination of the different sources within the appropriate religious and cultural context.

1. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is broken up into five main chapters. Chapter 1 will introduce, define and contextualise the field of this research, that is ancient Greek henotheism with specific regard to Orphism, Orphic theopantism and the debate around so-called ‘pagan monotheism’. The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of methodological considerations that are needed for the study of the sources which will be carried out in the following chapters by setting the limits of the research and trying to identify the question (or the questions) that constitutes the heart of this thesis. The focus will be on the main elements of cognitive studies of religion with a stress on the concepts of intuitive and reflective beliefs. In line with the observations made about religious phenomena using a cognitive approach by scholars such as Scott Atran, Dan Sperber and Pascal Boyer, we will observe how it is possible to trace a distinction among different religious henotheistic tendencies between an approach to the divine which is less aware of the perception of the god(s) and another which is more aware of the intellectual position towards the divine, reflects on its condition and on the characteristics and status of this divine. These theoretical tools will be applied to ancient sources – and later on in the thesis to specifically Orphic sources – linked with the theme of divine unity and multiplicity, in an attempt to understand how these phenomena were perceived by the ancient Greeks. It will also be necessary to outline what has been written about henotheism and the way this phenomenon has been seen and studied by previous scholarship. Therefore, a summary of the *status quaestionis* and review of the relevant

literature on the issue will be the essential starting point of the research in the last section of chapter 1.

Chapter 2 explores early Christian reception of the Orphic henotheistic sources that I will deal with in this thesis. Since many of the sources that will be examined in later chapters are transmitted in Late Antique texts and apologetic works, it is worth considering how these texts have come to us and through which lens they have been read in the first centuries CE. Indeed, we cannot take into consideration some of these texts or fragments without mentioning how they survived through centuries and if and how the sources in which they are reported may be biased. To do this, I will first give an overview of the relationship between Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity, focusing on the different apologetic strategies that may be found when analysing the Christian reception of Orphic sources, terminology and concepts. I will therefore briefly outline the main apologetic strategies which some of the most important apologists used when coming into contact with these pagan sources: appropriation and adaptation or, on the other hand, criticism, rejection and rupture. I will then proceed with the analysis of the main Christian apologists that dealt with Orphic henotheistic sources – that is the *De Monarchia* and *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, Cyril's *Contra Julianum*, Clement's *Protrepticus* and *Stromateis*, Theodoret's *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* and the *Theosophia Tubingensis*.

Chapter 3 represents the core of the analysis, namely the examination of the most relevant Orphic fragments that I argue can be associated with more reflective belief sources which express henotheistic views on the divine. The sources which will be taken into consideration include fr. 416 (298 K.) from the lost Orphic Μικρότερος Κρατήρ (Shorter Krater), fr. 543 F (239 K.) belonging to a group of selected Orphic fragments differently attributed to a lost Dionysian Orphic Poem, fr. 691 F (248 K.) often included in a *corpus* of texts known as 'Διαθηκαί' (Orphic Testaments) and the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*. This *Hymn to Zeus* in particular might be considered an interesting case of confluence between a reflective

context (that is, a theogonic narrative framework in which an intellectual activity is taking place) and a more intuitive kind of expression, that is a possible henotheistic ritual occasion lying behind the genre of the hymn set in the theogony. It will be therefore interesting to analyse these different elements in order to try to shed light on the issue of divine unity in Orphic sources.

Following on from this, chapter 4 explores possible henotheistic features in what I define as Orphic more intuitive sources, namely the collection of the *Orphic Hymns*. This anonymous collection is composed of 87 hexametrical poems each addressed to a single divinity, dated from the 2nd century BCE until the 5th century CE but probably collected around the 2nd-3rd century CE. Their origin remains unclear, but many consider them a liturgical book of a religious cult society, possibly collected in Asia Minor for a Dionysian association based in Pergamum. I will draw attention to the importance of this collection as a versification and re-elaboration of a cultural and religious heritage rooted in an original ritual context. I will focus on specific hymns and deities which present similarities and differences with the gods of the traditional pantheon and which emerge from the plurality of this pantheon with specific and peculiar features of unity or uniqueness. Indeed, some of the poems such as *Hymn 15, 19, 20 and 52* present a divine figure (Zeus or Dionysos) which appears to acquire the status of a 'one' god, thus appearing to be a manifestation of a henotheistic tendency.

Lastly, chapter 5 aims to trace the development of divine unity and uniqueness in Orphic henotheistic sources in successive historical periods and environments. An example of such development is to be found in the *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus* - a poem written in Greek and attributed to Orpheus composed by a Jew during the Hellenistic period around the 2nd century BCE in Alexandria of Egypt. The text appears to be a Jewish imitation of an Orphic Hieros Logos where the legendary singer Orpheus professes conversion to the one God of the Hebrew Bible. The author, belonging to the stream of Hellenistic Judaism, aims to glean concepts and images from the religious and philosophical Greek heritage (including many of

what I would define as ‘henotheistic sources’) in order to show how the belief in one single God also belonged to Greek wisdom, even though in an incomplete way. This chapter will focus on the literary, cultural and religious characteristics of this poem, its milieu of composition and its author(s), drawing attention to the delicate balance between features of transcendence and, on the other side, immanence which emerge from the varied terminology of the Greek text. An in-depth analysis of a number of terms, derived both from biblical and Greek (partly Orphic) sources, will help cast light on the religious and literary relevance of this peculiar Hieros Logos.

The Appendix, placed before the bibliographical references, provides supplementary information to the main thesis. It includes the most important sources which could not be inserted in full in the body of the text and serves as a space for materials that help clarify and support my arguments.

2. Intuitive and Reflective Beliefs

First and foremost, it is worth offering an overview of some studies which over the past few decades have provided important in-depth analyses of ancient religious beliefs using a cognitive approach to cast light on a very complex topic such as human belief and the different kinds of attitude towards the divine.

In the second essay of his work *On Anthropological Knowledge* Dan Sperber tries to analyse the variety of human beliefs using a cognitive approach, in an attempt to describe how different religious ideas and practices could be explained. After having analysed and examined the intellectualist and symbolist approach to the problems of relativism used to interpret irrational beliefs, Sperber proceeds with the analysis of the possible ways to study

different beliefs with the risk of presenting interpretations and speculations using a didactic and rigid slant.² It seems important to me to clarify what he means by the term ‘belief’:

‘Believe’ is standardly described as a verb of propositional attitude [...] along with ‘know’, ‘suppose’, ‘regret’, ‘hope’, etc. These verbs typically take as object a sentence introduced by ‘that’ (e.g., ‘Paul assumes that Bill will come’) and specify the mental attitude (here *assuming*) of the subject (Paul) to the proposition expressed by the sentential object (*Bill will come*). As already suggested, there is no reason to expect that these ordinary language notions would be retained by a well-developed psychological theory.³

However, Sperber goes on to comment that the term ‘propositional attitude’ might be too generic and confusing, since propositions are either true or false and do not include the possibility of ambiguous or different attitudes. He underlines the fact that what we call ‘beliefs’ might give birth to different interpretations all of which may be taken into consideration by us without supporting one in particular and denying the others.⁴

What seems evident from these initial observations is that what we call ‘belief’ might not be always subject to one single interpretation and, maybe most of all, these beliefs might not have been perceived as ‘propositions’ by the worshippers in the first place. Sperber then introduces the notion of ‘semi-propositional’ beliefs, which approximate but do not fully achieve propositionality.⁵ In this sense, we may be able to formulate an interpretation of a particular phenomenon (in our case, an alleged henotheistic ‘belief’), but do not have the certainty that our opinion and interpretation actually corresponds to the idea (proposition) that the author or the worshipper was trying to convey. Indeed, we are not even sure to what extent the author or worshipper (‘believer’) was fully aware of his hypothetical propositional attitude, so that we should be even more careful in our inquiry. This careful research attitude (‘semi-propositional representation’ in Sperber’s words) is strongly related to the evidence

² Sperber 1985: 45-46.

³ Sperber 1985: 49.

⁴ Sperber 1985: 50.

⁵ Sperber 1985: 51.

and the elements that I will be able to collect in my research, thus leading me to the analysis of possible diverse interpretations and a final better understanding of the henotheistic phenomenon. Sperber concludes that “the speaker's or author's intention is not to convey a specific proposition. It is to provide a range of possible interpretations, and to incite hearers or readers to search that range for the interpretations most relevant to them. The ideas that come as by-products of this search may suffice to make it worthwhile, particularly when no final interpretation is ever arrived at”.⁶ This is not to say that it is not possible to come to a conclusion: interpretations of some contexts and cases may be related to henotheistic expressions, but the approach should always be careful (since we are examining the perception of the divine in ancient cultures) and open to debate.

As a consequence of this methodological introduction, Sperber distinguishes between ‘factual beliefs’ and ‘representational beliefs’:

Factual beliefs are just plain ‘knowledge’, while representational beliefs could be called ‘convictions’, ‘persuasions’, ‘opinions’, ‘beliefs’, and the like. In both cases what is being processed is a mental representation, but in the case of a factual belief, there is awareness only of (what to the subject is) a fact, while in the case of a representational belief, there is an awareness of a commitment to a representation.⁷

If applied to our religious context, more precisely to the inquiry of henotheistic features, these two ‘concepts’ could be seen as a distinction between an approach to the divine which is less aware of its perception of the god(s) and another approach which is more aware of its intellectual position towards the divine, reflects on its condition and on the characteristics and status of the divine. The first ‘factual’ belief could be associated with ritual contexts, in which the worshippers focus on one specific god during the cult or performance but do not properly reflect on the status of that particular god as supreme, while the second type of

⁶ Sperber 1985: 53.

⁷ Sperber 1985: 54.

belief could be represented by the intellectual approach of philosophers and thinkers who actually reflected on the theme of divine oneness with a certain degree of awareness.

Sperber offers a clearer and more definitive distinction in his later article *Intuitive and Reflective Beliefs*, which we could embrace as an effective and shareable distinction:

We have two kinds of beliefs. We have intuitive data-base beliefs, which are inscribed in our mind in a manner such that they are automatically treated as data. They are expressed in an intuitive mental lexicon that allows spontaneous inference. Intuitive beliefs are a most fundamental category of cognition. Given the fact that we have intuitive beliefs and a meta-representational ability, we are also capable of having reflective beliefs and reflective concepts, or to take a reflective stance towards intuitive concepts and beliefs. Reflective beliefs are a loose family of derived attitudes that are continuous with other reflective attitudes of a non-credal kind.⁸

Along these lines is anthropologist Scott Atran who, in his book *In Gods We Trust: the Evolutionary Landscape of Religion*, discusses aspects of all religions as beliefs in supernatural beings from a multisided cognitive approach.⁹ Atran supports the idea that certain intuitive mental processes can generate non-reflective beliefs, which may affect the behaviour and ritual practices of the community of the worshippers in many cultures despite the geographical and chronological setting. These non-reflective, non-committal beliefs appear to be the opposite of more deliberate reflective beliefs which are the result of an intellectual activity and reflection on divine agent(s).

⁸ Sperber 1997: 82-83.

⁹ The author defines his cognitive approach as one that “focuses its subject not from the more traditional philosophical, historical, or sociological standpoints, but from a vantage that I think is more basic and necessary to all of these: that of cognitive culture theory. By cognition, I mean simply the internal structure of ideas that represent the world and that directs behaviors appropriate to the world represented. By culture, I intend only the distributed structure of cognition, that is, the causal networking of ideas and behaviors within and between minds. Religion, science, and any or all regularities of culture are just more or less reliable (statistically identifiable) causal distributions of mental representations, and public displays of those representations, among a given population of minds in a specified ecological context” (Atran 2002: 9-10).

More broadly, however, religious beliefs are - according to Atran - by-products of the human mind even if they cannot be separated from a biological and adaptive generative context.¹⁰ Atran uses the metaphorical term 'spandrel' to refer to these by-products of the human perception, as a "structural form or space that arises as a necessary concomitant to another decision in design and is not meant to have any direct utility in itself".¹¹ When discussing the creation of the idea of god(s) and divine agents, Atran defines supernatural agency¹² and later provides in-depth analysis of ritual manifestations and cultural representations, drawing attention to what he defines as 'human metarepresentational abilities', that are "intimately bound to fully developed cognitions of agency and intention", and which "also allow people to entertain, recognize, and evaluate the differences between true and false beliefs".¹³ Overall, Atran's study appears to highlight the need for a deeper analysis of the human approach to beliefs, trying to distinguish between more intuitive and non-committal beliefs ('factual intuitions')¹⁴ and, on the other hand, other kinds of more reflective and intellectual ways to relate to the divine.¹⁵

Anthropologist Pascal Boyer also gave his contribution to the study of cognitive religion in his book *Religion Explained: the Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*. Here Boyer analyses the mental processes that 'originate' religion together with emotional programmes that, according to the author, are connected to the mind. After having offered an overview of the nature and characteristics of supernatural concepts (gods, spirits), as well as the relationship between religious thoughts and death as well as the nature of different kinds of rituals, the author focuses on the reasons that lie behind religious belief(s) and their features. In Boyer's

¹⁰ Atran 2002: 44-45.

¹¹ Atran 2002: 43.

¹² Atran 2002: 57.

¹³ Atran 2002: 112.

¹⁴ Atran 2002: 113.

¹⁵ Atran seems to be of the same opinion as Sperber when they both believe in the role of reflective activity in the transmission of cultural traditions over time. On this matter see Sperber 1997: 83.

theory the existence of such beliefs is based on a group of cognitive systems shared by all human minds that determine the success and plausibility of certain religious beliefs. ‘Religious cues’¹⁶ may activate a particular set of these systems that render those religious concepts plausible and acceptable. Let us then focus on a few significant observations made by Boyer on beliefs in the last chapter of his book, linking those observations with the field of this preliminary research, that is, henotheistic beliefs and manifestations.

Firstly, he draws attention to two different ways in which the mind could approach a religious belief, which call to mind the distinctions between intuitive and reflective beliefs created by Sperber and the reflections of Atran on metarepresentational abilities. Boyer comments that one should always be careful when discussing different beliefs and try to distinguish between the implicit (intuitive?) mental processes that are involved in a certain occasion – a specific henotheistic ritual occasion, we may hypothesise – and some explicit intellectual activities that we might call reflective representations (metarepresentations in Atran’s words). Indeed, Boyer specifies that what is usually called ‘belief’ ‘is very often an attempt to justify or explain the intuitions we have as a result of implicit processes in the mental basement. It is an interpretation of (or a report on) these intuitions.’¹⁷

Secondly, Boyer significantly lingers on the nature of religious representations in human minds, arguing that the interest of the worshippers often does not reside in general divine properties or powers but on specific ‘instances of interaction’¹⁸ with them. This appears to be of some interest for the aim of this analysis since, as will be seen in the next chapter, one feature of many henotheistic manifestations is that they are specifically related to the ritual context and often refer to some particular ‘practical’ features of the god at issue, seen for example as a supreme saviour and helper.

¹⁶ Boyer 2001: 299.

¹⁷ Boyer 2001: 305.

¹⁸ Boyer 2001: 312.

3. Mystery, *Sophia* and the Orphic Corpus

I would like to end this introduction to my research by clarifying one of the most important categories of the study of religion that I will here use, that of ‘mystery’.¹⁹ The notion of mysteries, mystic rites or initiation usually translates the Greek words *telete/teletai*, *mysteria/myesis* and *orgia* and indicates a number of rituals (or partially, as we shall see in the case of Orphism, a set of knowledge) linked with specific recurring deities and contexts, marked by a somewhat voluntary character and having different features than the most common and widespread religious practices of the city-states. These deities include Demeter (Eleusinian mysteries), Dionysos, Isis, the Kabeiroi and the Great Gods of Samothrace, Mithras and others. Some of the main elements of these mysteries seem to have been secluded (partially secret) rituals and initiation practices involving sometimes extreme emotional participation – open to people coming from different places across the Mediterranean world – purification rituals and ecstatic practices aimed at securing a more intimate and personal relationship with the god(s) at issue. Another element would be a certain degree of concern about human destiny after death (eschatology), although this appears to be relevant only to some of the mysteries (the rites connected to Demeter and the Orphic ones for example) and presents peculiarities depending on the context.²⁰ Ideologically linked with a mythical past but projected towards the future thanks to the

¹⁹ For an introduction to the mysteries and the history behind this terminology see among others Bianchi 1976: 1-15; Burkert 1987: 1-11; Scarpi 2002: xi-li; Sfameni Gasparro 2003b: 9-117; Bowden 2010: 6-25; Parker 2011: 247-264; Bremmer 2014: vi-xiv.

²⁰ As I shall make clear shortly and during the discussion of the sources, I will not focus on the side of Orphism which deals with eschatology and life after death connected, for example, to the Orphic tablets. I will only mention these elements when discussing a few passages of the *Orphic Hymns*. Burkert questions the importance of this: “there was no dogmatic faith in overcoming death in mysteries [...]. There was neither gospel nor revelation to immunize believers against the disasters of this life. Mysteries, like votive religion, remained to some extent an experimental form of religion. As such, they could at times disappoint the hopes of believers” (Burkert 1987: 29).

ritual practice, the mysteries appear to embody a dynamic of change and transformation both in a practical and metaphorical way – although always maintaining a certain degree of relationship with the public life.²¹ This logic of transformation thus starts in the present but can also continue after death, which can be read and somehow ‘domesticated’ through the rituals.

A critical discussion of previous scholarship on the mysteries was carried out by Burkert and Italian scholars such as Bianchi and Sfameni Gasparro,²² followed by Richard Gordon, Jan Bremmer and others.²³ Burkert’s fundamental 1987 volume on the mysteries dealt with a methodological (and typological) interpretation of the different kinds of sources divided into main thematic groups,²⁴ examining the Eleusinian mysteries and the Dionysian ones, along with those connected to Demeter, Isis and Mithras. The scholar tried to overcome some of the most wide-spread misconceptions of his time about the mysteries such as their late chronological collocation, their oriental origins and spiritual nature, making use of a ‘comparative phenomenological’²⁵ approach to the study of the ancient mysteries. Although the examination of the evidence is often inconsistent (and sometimes confused) as well as apparently bound to those Christian influences which the author tries to get rid of,²⁶ the book can be appreciated for bringing to our attention the importance of re-defining the notion of the mysteries as ‘religions’, trying to distance them from Christian interpretations, allowing

²¹ Scarpi 2002: xxviii.

²² See Bianchi 1976 and 1979, which I shall analyse shortly, Sabbatucci 1991 and Sfameni Gasparro 2003b.

²³ See Cosmopoulos 2003; Bremmer 2014.

²⁴ Eschatology; social context (groups and individuals); ‘theological’, mythological and philosophical elements; the experience of the mysteries (Burkert 1987: vii). The section on philosophy and the idea of a certain ‘allegorizing’ tendency in mystic writings/*logoi* has proved to be particularly interesting for the aim of my research.

²⁵ Burkert 1987: 4.

²⁶ As Bremmer comments, Burkert’s contribution “throws light on all kinds of aspects of the Mysteries, but does not illuminate their historical development or the logic of their rituals and so, in the end, remains somewhat unsatisfactory” (Bremmer 2014: xi). As for Bremmer, a critical response to Bremmer’s approach to the study of the rituals performed in the most important mystery cults is offered by Herrero (2016).

space for interactions between the public sphere and private/secret rites, and stressing the importance of the contribution of anthropology to the study of these rituals. Bremmer's later contribution then moves towards a more modern interpretation of the phenomenon of the Greek mysteries, aiming at avoiding all-encompassing definitions and underlining the peculiarities of the different contexts and aims: those of Eleusis, Samothrace, Isis and Mithras as well as those connected to Orpheus.²⁷

I now finally turn to Orpheus, Orphism and the Orphic corpus in order to clarify my position towards the debate on the Orphic phenomenon, and to illustrate a first overview of what will be the Orphic sources and themes examined in this research. Following the position of Bernabé, Herrero de Jáuregui, the so called 'School of Rome' (among others Bianchi, Cosi, Sfameni Gasparro and Cerutti) and others²⁸ I consider Orphism as a complex religious and cultural phenomenon characterized by a constantly evolving set of ritual practices as well as mythical and theological knowledge, known thanks to archaeological evidence and a corpus of writings and later testimonies, which give life to an 'Orphic lifestyle' (*orphikos bios*) reflecting both a practical and an ideological model, tradition and orientation.²⁹ Far from being a proper 'religion' or a unified set of doctrines, Orphism may be conceived as a fluid poetical, religious and cultural tradition grouped together under the authority of Orpheus and characterized by a few thematic cores open to external literary, philosophical and ritual influences developing through time and giving life to more or less important variations.

²⁷ Bremmer 2014.

²⁸ In defense of the existence (and use of this terminology) of 'Orphism' and 'Orphic' see among others Sabbatucci 1991: 43-45; Bianchi 1992: 279-280; Cosi 1995 (especially 100-101); Scarpi 2002: 349-355; Tortorelli Ghidini 2006: 11-23.

²⁹ It is not my aim to provide a full bibliographical review on the immensely complex theme of Orphism. For an *excursus* on Orphic tradition from Classical Greece to Neoplatonism and a bibliographical update I would like to mention among others Guthrie 1935; Bianchi 1992; Brisson 1995; Cosi 1995; Scarpi 2002: xi-li and 349-355; Santamaria Álvarez 2003; Bernabé 2005b; Tortorelli Ghidini 2006: 11-60.

Along with the term ‘mystery’ which has been associated with the Orphic tradition, I also embrace the term ‘mysteriosophy’ used by Bianchi to refer to “a special manner of seeing the *cosmos*, man and the history of the gods: a manner which implies a *sophia* or general mystic conception of life and of the *cosmos*, of its divine origins, of the perpetual and recurring cycle of changes which govern it [...]”.³⁰ A mysteriosophy thus encompasses both a ritual element (a more intuitive side of the Orphic belief) and a doctrine, a *sophia* involved with philosophical conceptions bilaterally influenced by other philosophies (a more reflective side of the Orphic belief) but with distinctive thematic traits.

The Orphic ‘literary’ corpus, of which I will here only give a brief account, is extremely complex and fluid but presents a few overlapping thematic cores. For what concerns the classical period it is possible to distinguish, within the literature ascribed or linked to Orpheus, between cosmogonic and theogonic poems (such as the *Hieronymian Theogony*, the one contained in the Derveni Papyrus, and the *Eudemian* one),³¹ cosmological poems, several so called ‘Hieroi Logoi’ containing doctrinal elements whose features we know little about, and magical texts containing rites and *formulae* inspired by popular formulations and characterized by a propitiatory aim. Apart from the theogony of the *Rhapsodies*, typical of the Hellenistic age is the tendency to associate Orpheus with contexts which are different from strictly religious ones: it is possible, indeed, to find astrological poems, botanical, medical (*Ephemeride*) and the *Lithica*, a short poem of epic hexameters. Lastly, as we shall see in chapter 4, poetic compositions also possibly played a role in the performance of rites: 87 *Hymns* are addressed to different divine entities preceded by a proem, which are likely to have been composed in Asia Minor and are dated between the 2nd century BCE and the 3rd

³⁰ Bianchi 1976: 6. See also Bianchi 1992: 274-277.

³¹ For a thorough study of Orphic theogonies see Meisner 2018. The volume provides a sophisticated and documented contribution to the debate on Orphic literature, placing emphasis on a few themes such as the fluidity of the diverse and complex Orphic literary corpus, the application of the theoretical lens of bricolage to the composition of Orphic poems and the importance of a detailed contextualization of the texts focusing on Neoplatonic interpretations.

century CE with liturgical aims, thus potentially considered as cultic texts. Usually dated back to the 2nd century BCE is the fragmentary Gurob papyrus (found in Egypt) of Orphic-Dionysian inspiration and containing invocations to the gods and ritual *formulae*.³²

This research will not focus on anthropological and/or eschatological texts, linked with the idea of a divine origin of humanity, nor on the role played by Dionysos or the Eleusinian mysteries.³³ I will draw attention, instead, to a particular side of Orphic belief, that is the importance attributed to one divinity in a specific set of texts linked with Orphism which deal with philosophical issues of theology, cosmology and (partially) cosmogony and theogony.³⁴ I will examine (and problematize) a set of carefully selected Orphic fragments and their reception, leaving aside other kinds of sources such as the Orphic tablets and other archaeological findings, trying to contextualize them and highlight possible textual relationships through a comparative analysis. The features of the emergence of this peculiar divinity in Greek religion and Orphism will be the starting point of the first chapter of this dissertation.

³² For an introduction to Orphic literature see Guthrie 1935: 11-24; West 1983; Brisson 1995; Ricciardelli 2000: xvi-xxi; Price-Kearns 2003: 396-397; Bernabé 2005b; Herrero 2010a: 31-86 and 2010b, and the extended bibliography which can be there found.

³³ On the *vexata quaestio* of the relationship between Orphism and Bacchic mysteries see among others: Seaford 1986 and Edmonds 2013.

³⁴ The texts are quoted following Bernabé's editions (Bernabé 2004, 2005a and 2007a) along with Kern's notation indicated by a 'K.', in brackets (according to his edition- Kern 1922).

1. Methodological Considerations on Henotheism

The chapter will introduce, define and contextualise the field of this research, that is ancient Greek henotheism with specific regard to Orphism, Orphic theopantism and the debate around so called 'pagan monotheism'. As a matter of fact, among the various and different sources ascribable or linked to Orphism some of them present a divine figure which, remarkably emerging from the plurality of a polytheistic structure, acquires the status of a 'one' god (separate and complete). The aim of this chapter is to introduce the study of these sources by setting the limits of the research and trying to identify the questions that represent the heart of this dissertation. As a consequence, the focus will be on the theme of divine unity and multiplicity, in an attempt to understand how these phenomena were perceived by the ancient Greeks.

To do so, it will be necessary to outline here what has been written about henotheism and the way this phenomenon has been seen and studied by previous scholarship. Therefore, a draft of the *status quaestionis* will be the essential starting point of the research. It is, however, my aim to investigate these previous studies with critical sensibility, placing the fundamental questions about Greek henotheism at the heart of my treatise and trying not to be bounded by restrictive definitions.

1.1 Henotheism: History of a Term

H. S. Versnel has defined henotheism as:

the privileged devotion to one god, who is regarded as uniquely superior, while other gods are neither depreciated nor rejected and continue receiving due cultic observance whenever this is ritually required.³⁵

He also specifies that:

the acclamation does not (necessarily) entail monotheistic notions ('there is no other god *except* this god') although this connotation may creep in from time to time. It denotes a personal devotion to one god ('there is no other god *like* this god') without involving rejection or neglect of other gods.³⁶

Versnel's concise and clear definitions represent a useful starting point in trying to outline the use and history of this debatable terminology.

The term 'henotheism' is a relatively modern coinage³⁷ derived from the union of the words ἓν 'one' and θεός 'god', now mainly referring to a religious phenomenon in which one divine entity, emerging from the plural gradation of a polytheistic structure, gains a particular importance and becomes the centre of a specific cult.

Before proceeding with the analysis of henotheism in ancient Greece, it is worth mentioning the two main authors who have first used this term to better inspect its origins and use. Versnel has observed that the term had originally been used in theological and philosophical works, more than in classical studies.³⁸ As a matter of fact, the very first one to have utilised the term 'henotheism' seems to have been Friedrich Schelling³⁹ who, in his

³⁵ Versnel 2011: 244.

³⁶ Versnel 1990: 35.

³⁷ Both Versnel (1990: 35) and Yusa (2005) stress the importance of the contribution of F. Max Müller to the success of the term.

³⁸ Versnel 1990: 35.

³⁹ Mackintosh 1915: 810; Pettazzoni 1954: 5; Yusa 2005: 3913.

lectures on the philosophy of mythology at the University of Berlin, refers to it to indicate a sort of 'rudimentary monotheism' which he thought was the idea of God in prehistoric times.⁴⁰

It was, however, F. Max Müller who contributed to render the term known to the academic community using it in his comparative studies of the 'science of language and religion'.⁴¹ Being one of the most important orientalists of his age, he traced the origins of Vedic Indians' religion locating them in the henotheistic form. His work *Introduction to the Study of Religion* contains four lectures delivered at the Royal Institution in London, between February and March 1870. After having delimited the field of research and having explained his methodology of the study of world religions and languages,⁴² the second lecture focuses on the importance of classification in order to parcel out, examine and then compare the different contents of the research, always making use of a scientific approach open to debate.⁴³

He then reviews different categories in which it is possible to divide various world religions such as book-religions, revealed versus natural religions, national versus individual and, eventually, polytheistic, dualistic and monotheistic religions. Here, however, he does reckon that this classificatory stage has proved itself useful but incomplete. Müller thus adds two other classes, henotheism and atheism, the first being defined as different from (and preceding) polytheism because "although they recognise the existence of various deities, or names of deities, they represent each deity as independent of all the rest, as the only deity present in the mind of the worshipper at the time of his worship and prayer. [...] This peculiar phase of religion, this worship of single gods, forms probably everywhere the first stage in

⁴⁰ See Schelling 1842.

⁴¹ Müller 1879: 246.

⁴² For his clarifications on the use of a comparative methodology and on the definition of the term 'religion' see Müller 1873: 1-25.

⁴³ Müller 1873: 122-123.

the growth of polytheism, and therefore deserves a separate name”.⁴⁴ Faithful to his comparative approach and his oriental studies, he claimed to be able to find this religious tendency in a very prominent way in the religion of the Vedic poets, who praise in different hymns (sometimes even in the same hymn) different gods as supreme. This would be the case of Indra, the god of the blue sky, Agni, the god of fire, and Varuna, the ancient god of the firmament, who are temporarily invoked as supreme and independent from other deities. As a matter of fact, his later definition of henotheism in his article *Henotheism, Polytheism, Monotheism, Atheism* includes the alleged passage of objects like fire, the sun and the earth from the status of natural manifestations to supernatural forces and ultimately divine powers, thus making henotheism a developmental phase often preceding monotheism or polytheism.

In one of the most important passages he noticeably defines henotheism as:

A successive belief in single supreme gods, in order to keep it distinct from that phase of religious thought which we commonly call polytheism in which the many gods are already subordinated to one supreme god, and by which therefore the craving after the one without a second has been more fully satisfied. In the Veda one god after another is invoked. For the time being, all that can be said of a divine being is ascribed to him. The poet, while addressing him, seems hardly to know of any other gods. But in the same collection of hymns, sometimes even in the same hymn, other gods are mentioned, and they also are truly divine, truly independent, or, it may be, supreme.⁴⁵

One of the most important aspects to underline here seems to be that the ‘one-off’ emphasis placed by the worshippers on one particular powerful god during a rite or a hymn does not necessarily imply a specific theological commitment but is rather represented by a ‘simple’ address to one dominant divine entity without considering other gods who could become as powerful and important in other contexts. The Vedic hymns taken into consideration by

⁴⁴ Müller 1873: 141-142.

⁴⁵ Müller 1879: 261.

Müller thus appear to be one ‘germinal’ example of what I have defined in the introduction as intuitive beliefs, that is to say the address to one supreme god in one particular ritual occasion (a cult, a hymn, an *encomium*) without denying the existence and influence of other gods and without developing a particular theology. Furthermore, the scholar believes it to be possible to trace parallelisms between Vedic forms of religion and those of ancient Greece and Italy,⁴⁶ as well as to identify tendencies towards monotheism and atheism.⁴⁷

Many scholars have since then disassociated themselves from Müller’s approach to henotheism, seen by him merely as a phase towards either monotheism or polytheism and capable of being easily confused with other ‘standard’ terms such as monotheism, polytheism or monolatry.⁴⁸ However, his contribution to the spreading of the term cannot be denied and has enhanced the debate around different and more complex forms of religious devotion other than polytheism or monotheism in different religious contexts, recognising the unity of the divinity as the foundation of henotheistic manifestations.⁴⁹

1.2 Henotheistic Tendencies

It is important to underline the relevance of the cultic element when approaching the study of henotheistic expressions in the ancient world: the ‘rise’ of one particular god above others is indeed frequently related to a specific moment (often a rite or performance) and context, never denying other gods but rather being the centre of devotion at that particular moment. Versnel, for instance, focuses his attention on three studies on henotheism in one of the first and most detailed works on the subject.⁵⁰ Here the three manifestations of

⁴⁶ Müller 1879: 263, 266, 275-276.

⁴⁷ Müller 1879: 293-298.

⁴⁸ Yusa 2005: 3913.

⁴⁹ Yusa 2005: 3913.

⁵⁰ Versnel 1990.

henotheistic forms of adoration are Isis, the one goddess seen both as a saviour and a tyrant;⁵¹ Dionysos, according to the author the “first henotheistic experiment in Greek history and literature”;⁵² and Hermes, analysed in relation with the context of the Roman empire and his characteristics as ‘*trismegistos*’.⁵³ As Versnel’s first observations have demonstrated, when studying the henotheistic phenomenon, it is important to focus not only on the emerging of one god but also on the possible characteristics of these gods that temporarily acquire the status of ‘unique’ or ‘supreme’ gods. It has become clear, in fact, that the term ‘henotheism’ may embrace different types of tendencies.

Within the pagan sources which could be recognised as henotheistic it has been hypothesised⁵⁴ to distinguish between a tendency to ‘hierarchise’ the divine⁵⁵ and, on the contrary, an opposite tendency to ‘fuse’ the divine entity or ‘unify’ it, in a way that may be defined as ‘syncretistic’.⁵⁶ However, it is always important to avoid the risk of unifying different cases and contexts in one or few classifications, without paying attention to the different milieux in which the eulogies, acclamations, or philosophical and theological statements can be found.

For what concerns the first henotheistic ‘hierarchic’ tendency, the most relevant characteristic of the supreme divinity appears to be its uniqueness, being the result of a sort of ‘extraction’ of the one god from the many or -to put it another way- a sort of ‘raising’. Cerutti has written:

This [tendency] represents a development which might almost be defined as centrifugal, a development which distributes and separates the various expressions of the divine

⁵¹ Also analysed in Versnel 2011: 283-289.

⁵² In Euripides’ *Bacchae*; see Versnel 1990: 36-37.

⁵³ Versnel 1990: 237-251.

⁵⁴ See Cerutti 2003, 2009 and 2010; Sfameni Gasparro 2003a; Tommasi Moreschini 2007 and the extensive detailed bibliography that can be found in these volumes.

⁵⁵ Three of the most important sources are Apul. *De dog. Plat.* 1.204-205; Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 8.8 and 11.12; Porph. *Abst.* 2.34.

⁵⁶ See Cerutti 2009: 311-313, who suggests the example of Serapis.

along a vertical axis, which distinguishes the one from the many and at the same time the many among themselves. This differentiation may be in a vertical plane, which separates the inferior gods from demons, or in a horizontal plane, which separates visible from invisible gods, or benevolent from malevolent demons [...].⁵⁷

These divine beings -the ‘many’ opposite to the *deus summus*- are not, therefore, explicitly denied (as in monotheistic claims) nor left in the background, but instead their value seems to be ‘paradoxically’ increased, their existence being highlighted even if because of their lower status. This vertical divine hierarchy finds evidence especially in philosophical speculation; I will mention in one section below some of the most relevant exemplifications.⁵⁸

Such a hierarchic and vertical theological scheme happens to be the opposite of another one which finds evidence mainly in cultic and eulogistic manifestations,⁵⁹ and that is represented by a ‘centripetal’ tendency that drives the cult to focus on one divine figure which temporarily absorbs names, characteristics and roles normally belonging to other divine entities. This second attitude to the divinity therefore expresses the unity of the ‘one god’ of the henotheistic cult, more than its uniqueness as *deus summus*.⁶⁰ The ‘one god’ thus appears to become the centre of a convergent tendency of different divine figures towards one divine entity in ritual practice, even though the diverse structure of pagan polytheism is never questioned.

J. P. Kenney, in his *excursus* on what he calls ‘monotheistic’ elements from the 6th century BCE until Late Antiquity, has defined this tendency as one which “tended to focus upon the ultimate unity of divinity behind its plural manifestations. This ‘inclusive monotheism’ was thereby centred on a quite different way of understanding the divine nature, one that pressed beyond the many gods of polytheism to their final, divine ground. [...] Its intention

⁵⁷ Cerutti 2010: 18.

⁵⁸ Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 8.8 and 11.12; Porph. *Abst.* 2.34; Pl. *Ti.* and Xenophanes. See §1.4.

⁵⁹ Sfameni Gasparro 2003a: 106-107; Cerutti 2010: 18.

⁶⁰ Cerutti 2010: 18-19.

seems to have been to understand the fundamental monotheistic intuition of the divine oneness in terms of final and inclusive divine unity rather than in terms of divine singularity, exclusivity, or uniqueness”.⁶¹

1.3 Henotheism in Cultic Contexts

First of all, given the importance of the cultic and performing aspect of many henotheistic manifestations in the ancient Greek world, it is worth mentioning a few relevant cases of the second ‘centripetal’ tendency that I have presented above. Examples of the horizontal tendency may be found, according to the scholars who support this classification, in the context of eulogies and acclamations, whose evidence can be traced to literary and epigraphic sources.⁶² Three *formulae* can be identified as the most used in henotheistic ritual contexts, that are εἷς θεός, μόνος θεός and θεὸς ὕψιστος.

The first one has been deeply studied by scholarship,⁶³ is common in Semitic contexts but can also be found in pagan inscriptions and rituals mostly referred to saviour gods such as Serapis, often merged with Zeus.⁶⁴ These gods are not supreme because they have emerged and been set apart from the plurality of the divine beings, but precisely because they appear to have unified this plurality in one divine personality. The acclamation εἷς θεός is frequently found engraved in stone (inscriptions are very communicative examples of how an expression was widely used in ritual performances and special religious occasions), written

⁶¹ Kenney 1986: 271. Kenney focuses on what he defines as ‘Hellenic monotheism’ from the Pre-Socratics to Plato, Middle Platonism, Plotinus and the Neoplatonists. I here embrace Kenney’s observations though questioning the use of the term ‘monotheism’. See the section on ‘pagan monotheism’ in §1.6.

⁶² N. Belayche has studied these cultic manifestations in late paganism, focusing on the emerging of one privileged deity in the ritual expression of one or more worshippers. See Belayche 2010.

⁶³ See Peterson 1920 and Belayche 2010: 147-150. Versnel (1990: 96-205) noticeably entitles one of his chapters ‘*heis Dionysos*’.

⁶⁴ See Belayche 2010: 151; Cerutti 2010: 19-20.

in magical papyri and carved on various objects such as gems, rings and amulets.⁶⁵ Indeed, the most relevant illustrative recurrence of the term is perhaps that of the acclamation ‘εἷς θεὸς ὁ βοηθῶν/βοηθός’ (‘one god is the helper/healer’), along with the protective *formula* ‘εἷς θεὸς, βοήθει’ (‘oh one god, protect [us]’).⁶⁶ Although these connotations emphasise the relevance and extra-ordinary status of the one god, it is important to stress that these acclamations are not statements of belief in a single god: in fact, we may consider them close to those intuitive beliefs that I have previously mentioned,⁶⁷ characterised more by spontaneous ritual manifestations than by attentive reflection on the condition of the one god at issue. As Belayche significantly concludes, the expression εἷς θεός, which can be translated into ‘alone/unique’

signifies that the divinity was alone of its type, unmatched [...] capable of achieving the impossible, but not one god as such. It is the equivalent of a relative superlative form, [...] designed to affirm the unequalled characteristics of the god celebrated. These acclamations, which are the intensified form of an act of thanksgiving, accompany other ritual forms of exaltation, for example the use of epithets or theonyms of glorification and praise. This redesigning of the architecture of the divine world does not require the *heis theos* to be exclusive; on the contrary, the exaltation of a divinity takes on greater significance in a pluralistic context.⁶⁸

Along with this *formula* is the rarer but very significant expression μόνος θεός, which cannot be, however, confused with a declaration of monotheism. About this exaltation of a single deity in cultic performances Belayche has rightly observed that “the term *monos* appears to me to be an expression of privilege and exaltation through hymnic rhetoric, and not a declaration of uniqueness”,⁶⁹ something that is always worthy of being born in mind

⁶⁵ Belayche 2010: 148-151; Versnel 2011: 281.

⁶⁶ Versnel 2011: 281.

⁶⁷ Using Sperber’s terminology. See Sperber 1997.

⁶⁸ Belayche 2010: 166.

⁶⁹ Belayche 2010: 152.

and that prevents me from using the term ‘pagan monotheism’.⁷⁰ An illustrative example of this tendency can be found in an inscription unearthed in Maronea (Thrace) and dated back to the 2nd century BCE, in which Serapis and Isis are praised as *μόνοι θεοί* and exalted for their different divine virtues and powers.⁷¹ These acclamations, characterised in the last part of the hymn by the polyonymy of the two gods,⁷² significantly show how Isis and Serapis contain the merged virtues and properties of the other gods in a syncretic movement which could be traced to the second henotheistic tendency mentioned above. In fact, as Belayche observes, “the distinction of the couple in the experience of their devotees as *monoi theoi*, unique gods but not alone, illustrates the belief that Isis and Sarapis united in themselves the multiple individual representations of divine beings”.⁷³

The last *formula* that I have previously mentioned is *θεὸς ὑψίστος*, whose use has been studied also when merged to the divine figure of Zeus.⁷⁴ Epigraphic manifestations of this henotheistic acclamation, which can be traced from the Hellenistic period (especially 2nd century BCE) until the 6th century CE in several regions across the Mediterranean (Greece, Macedonia, Lycia, Lydia, Syria, Egypt) show the worship and, to some extent, the belief in a supreme god known by many names and that tended towards the unification of different deities into one. It might be interesting for the aim of this research to cite here Mitchell’s observations on the matter, who claimed the existence of a cult related to this particular terminology, influenced (especially in Asia Minor) by Jewish cross-fertilization. As the scholar observes:

The cult of Zeus Hypsistos in Greece and Macedonia surely developed from local roots, although the import of the terminology of the synagogue suggests that it absorbed Jewish influence. The concept of a highest god and his angels is likely to have evolved

⁷⁰ As we shall see in §1.6.

⁷¹ RICIS I 114/0202, 17-22. See Bricault 2005: 176-178.

⁷² RICIS I 114/0202, 22-42.

⁷³ Belayche 2010: 151.

⁷⁴ See selected bibliography in Mitchell 1999: 147-148.

independently in the unhellenized communities of the interior of Asia Minor and on the north shore of the Black Sea. [...] It developed firmer outlines as a result of cross-fertilization with the ideas of Jewish or Judaizing groups, producing a religious culture which spanned the pagan-Jewish divide. The Jewish influence was particularly effective in focusing religious ideas. [...] The worshippers of Theos Hypsistos, the *theosebeis* as they called themselves, acquired many Jewish characteristics but did not contemplate full conversion. It remained important to them to remain a part of the non-Jewish world, to preserve the religious, moral and intellectual traditions which they had inherited in their Greek or native communities.⁷⁵

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether this interpretation of the *formula* θεὸς ὑψιστος can actually be applied to most of (if not all) the recurrences and cases of the use of this terminology. Thus far, Mitchell's position has not escaped criticism and several studies have questioned the applicability of the cult to such various and different contexts.⁷⁶ It thus seems more appropriate to consider θεὸς ὑψιστος as another case of a henotheistic manifestation of a horizontal tendency, referring to one particular and dominant god different from time to time and characterised by an intuitive and spontaneous approach to the relationship with the divine. As Chaniotis points out, "the wide diffusion of dedications to Theos Hypsistos should not be taken as evidence for the existence of a single Theos Hypsistos stemming from a single and homogeneous religious concept. The homogeneity of language sometimes conceals a diversity of concepts; the shared vocabulary may not be the result of a harmonious dialogue, but of competition or confrontation".⁷⁷

To conclude, as has been shown in this section, in more intuitive belief sources the emphasis is placed on the cultic element: the importance of the god at issue seen as the dominant god is mostly limited to the ritual performance and to the religious space of the temple or area specifically dedicated to the god. The worshippers - though focused on the

⁷⁵ Mitchell 1999: 126-127.

⁷⁶ See Belayche 2010 and Chaniotis 2010: 119-120.

⁷⁷ Chaniotis 2010: 120.

cult - do not forget about the existence of other gods, and their spontaneous devotion to that particular god does not flow into a reflection on the status of the divinity as 'unique'.

1.4 Philosophical Reflections on 'Oneness'

Moving now on to what has been previously called a henotheistic 'hierarchic' tendency, it is worth recalling that the most relevant characteristic of this supreme divinity appears to be its peculiar 'uniqueness', being the result of a sort of 'extraction' of the one god from the many, a kind of distribution and separation of the diverse divine entities along an imaginary axis which could be represented as vertical (superior *versus* inferior gods) or horizontal (for example visible *versus* invisible gods).⁷⁸ As we have seen, the other divine entities are not explicitly denied but rather highlighted even if because of their lower or different status.

This divine hierarchy finds evidence especially in philosophical speculation; it is possible, indeed, to connect philosophical thought about henotheism to the kind of beliefs that we have previously analysed as reflective, thanks to the observations made by scholars of cognitive studies such as Sperber, Atran and Boyer. As a matter of fact, the various and different thinkers that I am about to examine (Xenophanes, Plato, Porphyry, Maximus of Tyre among others) differentiate themselves from the henotheistic manifestations that I have analysed in the previous section precisely because these manifestations may be considered as a spontaneous and temporary focus on one specific god in a cultic and ritual context, and not an intellectual reflection on the status of that god. On the contrary, the philosophical figures that I will now analyse reflected a metarepresentational ability (as Sperber and Atran might observe) to think about the status of a 'one' god with certain features, thus producing a reflection on that one henotheistic system which is characterised

⁷⁸ See Cerutti 2010: 18.

by a degree of awareness that is not explicitly found in cultic and ritual henotheistic expressions.

In the *Timaeus*, one of the last dialogues of the Greek philosopher, Plato discusses the origins of the *cosmos* and of the human race through the analysis of the activity of the ‘One’ divine intelligence shaping the material world and human souls.⁷⁹ When talking about theological consequences of his previous statements about the *cosmos* created by the Demiurge, the philosopher noticeably describes how the god creates other divine entities inferior to him (item 1).⁸⁰ As Giovanni Reale has pointed out, the distinction between this god and other inferior created gods leads to a reshaping of traditional Olympian Greek polytheism.⁸¹ Indeed, Plato here seems to be expressing the status, role and function of the other gods opposite to the supreme god who is above them.⁸² Moreover, François interestingly observes that in this passage “une distinction très nette se trouve établie entre l’emploi de θεός ou de ses synonymes et celui de θεοὶ. D’un part, il s’agit de la Puissance organisatrice dont il a déjà été question; d’autre part, apparaît la conception de divinités subalternes qui secondent cette Puissance dans la réalisation de ses desseins”.⁸³ The term (ὁ) θεός is explicitly used in a later passage where Plato describes how the material universe is shaped and given order by a god who appears to be supreme (item 2 of the Appendix).⁸⁴ The last part of the dialogue sees indeed the appearance of both the terms (ὁ) θεός ‘the god’, and

⁷⁹ This is not the place to discuss Plato’s complex cosmology and theory of forms and ideas; I will here make some observations related to his theological reflections close to a henotheistic tendency. For an introduction to Plato’s *Timaeus* and philosophy of religion see Mohr 1985; Kenney 1986: 280-282; Zeyl 2000; McPherran in Oppy-Trakakis 2009: 53-78.

⁸⁰ Pl. *Ti.* 41 a-b.

⁸¹ “Dal punto di vista teologico, in una certa misura e sia pure alla lontana, questo preparava, in qualche modo, la via al monoteismo. Infatti, la distinzione fra un Dio increato e dèi creati portava un radicale ridimensionamento del politeismo greco. In questo passo [...] Platone esprime in sintesi, in una maniera davvero emblematica, lo status ontologico, la dipendenza assiologica, nonché il ruolo e la funzione degli dèi creati rispetto a Dio che li ha creati [...]” (Reale 2000: 30).

⁸² See also Pl. *Ti.* 69 b-c.

⁸³ François 1957: 273.

⁸⁴ Pl. *Ti.* 53 b.

τὸ θεῖον ‘the divine’,⁸⁵ which seems to indicate interchangeable concepts related to one divine being collectively uniting different divine entities.⁸⁶

A great deal of previous literature has focused on the theme of Platonic theology and cosmology,⁸⁷ and much of the scholarship has discussed the status and role of the god described in the *Timaeus*, also referred to as ‘the Demiurge’.⁸⁸ Even though this is not the place in which this complex theme is to be analysed, I would like to briefly stress here the kind of reflection that Plato decided to undertake and the complex role played by this divine entity in this dialogue.⁸⁹ Indeed, it could be argued that here Plato may have decided to begin a sort of specific philosophical statement about one peculiar divine figure, described as separated from other gods (in fact, their creator) and supreme, as well as the one who shaped the universe as we know it in an orderly way.⁹⁰ Such theological and cosmological considerations seem, therefore, to be characterised by an intellectual reflection on the status and function of that god thus making these considerations close to an activity that I have previously defined as ‘metarepresentational’. These philosophical observations may also be considered the sign of a certain awareness of theological issues that recalls the reflective beliefs I have mentioned before. It appears to be clear that we should not define Plato’s position as consciously henotheistic; nevertheless, it may be possible to connect him to those reflections (for example, the later Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry) on the status of a ‘one’

⁸⁵ Pl. *Ti.* 90-92.

⁸⁶ François 1957: 279, 301.

⁸⁷ See Mohr 1985: 131.

⁸⁸ Many different interpretations have been given about this figure: see for example Cornford 1937: 34-39; Menn 1995: 6-13. John Wood, for instance, claims that the Demiurge should be seen as a sort of mythical personification of the Good, which is also to be considered his own model for shaping the material world (Wood 1968). Tad Brennan mentions it while examining henotheistic hints in Stoic philosophers (Oppy-Trakakis 2009: 111).

⁸⁹ Richard Mohr underlines the importance of Plato’s Demiurge (and of his activity) in Mohr 1985: 141.

⁹⁰ John Rist believes to be able to trace in the *Timaeus* Plato’s ultimate reflection of the god’s status and his main features and qualities: goodness, providentialism and rationality among others (Rist 2012: 228).

god who does not exclude the existence of other gods⁹¹ but at the same time emerges as supreme. The Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry appears indeed to have also stated his devotion to one supreme god, worthy of being worshipped only with pure silence and thought, in his work *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (item 3 of the Appendix).⁹² Porphyry's reflections actually recall what Plato stated about one supreme god, never denying the existence of other divine entities of the Greek pantheon.

Another illustrative example of this reflective (henotheistic) belief characterised by a 'hierarchic' and centrifugal tendency could be found in the reflections of Maximus of Tyre, the 2nd century CE Greek orator and philosopher.⁹³ In one of his philosophical *Dissertations* (focused on theology, psychology and ethics) it is possible to find statements about the hierarchical organisation of the divine, from the supreme one until the daimonic entities (the δαίμονες, item 4 of the Appendix).⁹⁴ The 11th *Dissertation* continues the reflection on the theological and cosmological theme of the divine cosmic hierarchy, concentrating on the Platonic conception of the supreme god explained through the imaginative metaphor of the divine kingdom (item 5).⁹⁵

It is now worth drawing some conclusions after my considerations about possible henotheistic 'hierarchic' hints in both Plato and his successor Porphyry. We may observe together with Aaron Johnson, who entitles a chapter of his book 'Porphyry's taxonomy of the divine', that

⁹¹ Although the other gods assume a subordinate role in Plato's and Porphyry's passages that I have here mentioned, it seems hard to accept Mark McPherran's impression that "the old gods have become little more than noble lies that philosophers offer to children and non-philosophers in order to train and keep in check their unruly souls" (Oppy-Trakakis 2009: 74).

⁹² Porph. Abst. 2.34.

⁹³ For an introduction to the life and works of Maximus as well as a complete bibliography see among others Trapp 1997: xi-xciv.

⁹⁴ Max. Tyr. Diss. 8.8.

⁹⁵ Max. Tyr. Diss. 11.12.

we must feel the full weight of the complete lack of singularity of the One's divinity. Its oneness was exclusive; its divinity was shared. That is, the oneness of the One mattered a great deal (at least in more metaphysical contexts); but, when Porphyry translated the One into theological language its oneness as God was not explicitly treated. The appellations of this God emphasize his supremacy or priority relative to the other gods (hence, 'First God', or 'God over all'). [...] Porphyry's theological articulations set God the One at a heightened location atop a divine pyramid consisting of a multiplicity of other gods. We detect, therefore, the presence of two registers in which Porphyry speaks of the One: in ontological terms, the One is unique and beyond being; in theological terms, as God, the One shares the divinity of the gods. This absence of emphasis on the singularity of divinity of the highest God is exhibited in the ambiguity of his reference to a god or God in many of his works, especially the commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* [...].⁹⁶

Going back to the 6th century BCE, one last relevant example could be found in the third chapter of Versnel's *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* where the scholar continues and examines in depth his reflections and observations regarding henotheism, focusing on what he defines as 'three Greek experiments in oneness'. His aim is to question the widespread idea(l)⁹⁷ of an underlying unity in the diverse structure of the polytheistic religious sensibility, trying to analyse the relation between the 'one' god of some henotheistic manifestations and the 'many' of Greek religious culture. These examples are significant for the aim of this research, as they introduce three ancient cases in henotheism which have been defined by the scholar by three clear expressions: 'one *and* many', 'one *is* many' and 'one *is* the god'. These experiments are relevant also because of their chronology, since they date back to the 6th century BCE onwards, around the age of some of the Orphic sources that I will examine in the second chapter. Indeed, this will help us throw light on the phenomenon of what I now call 'Orphic henotheism', thanks to the comparative analysis of different but analogous significant cases. These cases differentiate themselves from the ones listed in the previous section since they do not seem to actually fall within the above-

⁹⁶ Johnson 2013: 61-62.

⁹⁷ Versnel 2011: 240.

mentioned categories of deities united into or subordinate to one supreme god, but rather within a different and maybe more complex interaction between unity and multiplicity.

One example worthy of being examined is that of the ‘one *and* many’, that is the relation of a one god and the many through the study of the Ionian philosopher Xenophanes of Kolophon (6th century BCE) who postulated the existence of one supreme god, motionless, described as a Great Mind (νοῦς), greatest among gods and men (and, as the greatest, not the only one):

εἷς θεὸς ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος οὔτε νόημα.
οὔλος ὄρα, οὔλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὔλος δέ τ’ ἀκούει.
ἀλλ’ ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.
αἰεὶ δ’ ἐν ταύτῳ μῖμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν.
οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαι μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ.⁹⁸

One god is greatest among gods and men,
not at all like mortals in body or in thought.
...whole he sees, whole he thinks, and whole he hears.
...but completely without toil he shakes all things by the thought of

his mind.

...always he abides in the same place, not moving at all,
nor is it seemly for him to travel to different places at different times.⁹⁹

There has been much debate around the alleged monism or monotheism of Xenophanes¹⁰⁰ and, on the contrary, his statements about the existence of other gods.¹⁰¹ Versnel proposes a solution to the contradiction pointing out that rather than uniting different gods or being the emanation of them, the ‘one god’ of Xenophanes is one *and* all but at the same time transcends both men and other divine entities which thus maintain their independent

⁹⁸ Xenoph. fr. 23- 26 Lesh. .

⁹⁹ Transl. Lesh. 1992: 31-33.

¹⁰⁰ See Barnes 1979: 82-99, who explicitly defines (and considers) Xenophanes a monotheist, and Kenney 1986: 277.

¹⁰¹ Xenoph. fr. 23 Lesh. .

status. It is, then, possible to postulate a complementarity and coexistence between the supreme *voũç* and the other gods in Xenophanes' philosophical position, far from any idea of inclusiveness.¹⁰² The philosopher is, indeed, following his ideas to their logical conclusion, and this could therefore be considered another example of an intellectual activity and theological reflection that is different from the one of performing a hymn to the gods. Versnel considers the case of Xenophanes an experiment in oneness, one example of a henotheistic conception which can be summed up as 'one *and* many'. This particular example will be also useful when discussing Orphic henotheism, as we shall see how peculiar the relation between the Orphic god(s) and reality is in specific Orphic sources.

1.5 Orphism and Henotheism

After having outlined different henotheistic manifestations related to the distinction between intuitive and reflective beliefs, it is now time to introduce the theme of a one god who, among Orphic sources, appears to acquire the status of a separate and 'complete' divine entity, noticeably emerging from the plurality of the traditional polytheistic structure (which is never called into question). As a matter of fact, among the various and heterogeneous sources linked to Orphism -anthropological, theological, cosmological- some of them appear to be characterised by a degree of reflection on a god which presents specific features of oneness and -to some extent- uniqueness. The following chapters of the thesis will analyse these diverse sources in depth; the aim of this section is to introduce some reflections about how to contextualise the different Orphic henotheistic manifestations that

¹⁰² Versnel 2011: 266. See also Tor 2017: 104-154 (especially pp. 125-126). "I take no issue with the suggestion that Xenophanes' theology is incipiently monotheistic insofar as it may imply a tendency towards reconceptualising the divine in the image of the 'greatest god' (B23-6[...]). But – and this is the important point for us – Xenophanes uses both polytheistic and monotheistic language when speaking positively about the divine [...]. This fact alone problematises ascriptions of full-fledged monotheism [...]. Xenophanes himself most probably remained vague on the numerical question" (Tor 2017: 125).

will be examined later on. It will here be seen, therefore, how previous scholarship has approached henotheism in Orphic contexts and the different terminology which has been used.

Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui explicitly uses the term ‘henotheism’ many times¹⁰³ when referring to the tendency, traceable to Orphism, “which purports to find within diverse cults indications of a sole and unique divinity who dominates the cosmos as a whole”.¹⁰⁴ According to the scholar, the tendency seems to be Pan-Hellenic and, moreover, it does not only belong to Greek culture but embraces traditions and concepts adopted by Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Persian cultures who seem to have influenced Orphic thought as we shall see in the next chapter.¹⁰⁵ The scholar describes this tendency both in terms of cultic manifestations and in terms of theological speculation. In terms of what we might call intuitive or non-reflective belief, the author points out that cases like some invocations contained in the *Gurob Papyrus*¹⁰⁶ or the Orphic *Hymn to the Sun*¹⁰⁷ present *formulae* “typical of the kind of henotheism that considers the specific god to whom cult is being paid as the only important deity”.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, different theogonic sources present theological and philosophical reflections which might be associated with what I have previously introduced as reflective beliefs and that seem to involve a higher degree of awareness. However, as the author observes, it should not be forgotten that henotheistic tendencies never exclude the existence of other divine entities typical of the traditional polytheistic structure:

¹⁰³ See for example Herrero 2010a: 21, 36, 130, 167, 317-322.

¹⁰⁴ Herrero 2010a: 21.

¹⁰⁵ Herrero 2010a: 21.

¹⁰⁶ The text is also cited by Versnel who describes it as one pre-Hellenistic example of Orphic invocation of a god acclaimed with the term εἷς. The scholar then argues that “Dionysos was the first god to be hailed with an acclamation that became the most characteristic identification of the great gods of later times. The problem, however, is that we have no idea about the cultural identity of the acclamation, although the text itself betrays unmistakably Orphic features. Did it originate in Greece or with a local cult group in Egypt, influenced by Egyptian conceptions?” (Versnel 2011: 302).

¹⁰⁷ Fr. 543 F (239 K.).

¹⁰⁸ Herrero 2010a: 54.

In the theogonies, different principles coexist: Orpheus was the singer as much of the henotheistic tendencies that identified the various gods with one another or gave primacy to Zeus as he was of the episodes involving each individual deity.¹⁰⁹

Herrero also dedicates a chapter of his book *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity* to the analysis of a few texts which were considered by later Christian authors as evidence for an Orphic ‘monotheism’ and that thus present strong henotheistic features as Herrero himself states.¹¹⁰ These texts are represented by the *Testament of Orpheus/Hieros Logos*, the *Hymn to Zeus*, and other Orphic verses from various Hymns collected by Clement in the *Stromateis*¹¹¹ and by the author of the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*,¹¹² which the scholar specifically defines as ‘hymns of henotheistic orientation’.¹¹³

Before continuing with the analysis of Herrero, I would now like to briefly discuss the use of the term ‘monotheism’ which has also been used by scholarship (and not only Christian apologists) to indicate the Orphic tendency that we are here introducing to address to a single god which thus becomes the centre of a cult or of a sort of theological reflection. Jane Harrison, for example, commenting on the *Orphic Hymns* and considering them as a blurred description of Orphic gods, argues that “with whatever attempt at individualisation they begin, the poet is soon safe away into a mystical monotheism. A more profitable enquiry

¹⁰⁹ Herrero 2010a: 167. In addition, the author goes on to comment that later Christian authors took advantage of the henotheistic tendency and the ‘contradictions’ that appeared to them as proofs of the distorted view of ancient polytheism.

¹¹⁰ Herrero 2010a: 179. A further analysis of Orphic theogonies and hymns considered as vehicles for ‘monotheism’ (*sic*) is to be found in a paper of Herrero himself published in the volume *Monotheism Between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Herrero 2010b). It seems important to stress here that the author often uses in this paper the term ‘monotheism’ and ‘monotheistic’, a use which distances this article from other works by the scholar. I will, however, frequently make reference to this detailed article, many elements of which appear to be worthy of being taken into consideration when analysing in depth diverse Orphic henotheistic sources.

¹¹¹ For example, Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.122 ff. See §2.3.

¹¹² See *Cohort.* 15.2.

¹¹³ Herrero 2010a: 191.

is, how far did primitive Orphism attempt monotheism, and of what nature was the one God whom the Orphic made in his own image?”¹¹⁴

When examining the figure of Phanes in Orphic religion, Guthrie too talks about the tendency to ‘blend’ different divinities in terms of syncretism and ultimately monotheism:

it is the natural concomitant of a tendency towards monotheism. The many gods of Olympus become the one god with many names. After what we know already of the Orphic writings, it will come as no surprise to learn that they were marked by syncretism, so far as we can judge, right from the outset. Here was a system which, on the side of doctrine, taught of the absorption of everything, gods included, into one god, and their rebirth from him again, and on the side of active religion taught the complementary idea of the worship of one god above all others.¹¹⁵

It is highly noticeable that Guthrie seems to identify, even if in an implicit way and without maybe being aware of it, the two categories of both reflective (‘the side of doctrine’) and non-reflective (‘the side of active religion’) beliefs. Indeed, he appears to recognise that in theological reflections such as the ones found in the Orphic theogonies the henotheistic ‘syncretic’ tendency was shown through the narration of the absorption of both the universe and other gods by the one god, while in cults and hymns the henotheistic tendency is represented by the ‘temporary’ worship of a single god acknowledged as supreme.

However, although Harrison’s and Guthrie’s observations on the theme of syncretistic tendencies in Orphic sources are without doubt of great importance, we should be extremely careful in the application of the term ‘monotheism’ when referring to this religious phenomenon. In fact, as we shall see in the next section on the coinage of the broader term ‘pagan monotheism’, traditional monotheistic claims appear to imply as their main feature the notion of a God which is both one and unique, and which refuses to be included in a

¹¹⁴ Harrison 1903: 625. For a different approach to *Orphic Hymns*, considered as a possible source of our knowledge of Orphism, see Morand 1997: 169-170.

¹¹⁵ Guthrie 1935: 100. See also Guthrie 1935: 251-252.

polytheistic structure characterised by the plurality of many divine entities like the Orphic henotheistic manifestations we are now analysing.

Back to Herrero de Jáuregui: in an important chapter about monism the author writes explicitly about henotheism in Orphic contexts in these terms:

If it is necessary to assign a label to the Greek religious tendency toward theological monism, a more suitable one appears to be the term 'henotheism', coined on the basis of the acclamation 'one is god' (...), much repeated in hymns, inscriptions and papyri. [...] This attitude maintains the ambiguity that permitted Greek religion to fluctuate without glaring inconsistency between a monistic conception of the divine and a polytheistic traditional language. Such is also the ambiguity that we find in Orphism.¹¹⁶

The author then goes on with the analysis taking into consideration the two categories that I have previously mentioned, that is the tendency to hierarchise the divine according to a vertical centrifugal movement and, on the other hand, another tendency to unite the divine according to a syncretistic, centripetal movement. He also observes that these two tendencies find expression in two different genres, which happen to be similar to the distinction between reflective and non-reflective beliefs that I have made in the previous sections (thus moving from a question of genre to a question of belief). As a matter of fact, the scholar points out that

Orphic poets cultivate both methods with particular success, due to their skilful handling of two traditional poetic genres, the theogony and the hymn. [...] In the theogonic framework the henotheistic orientation is achieved through the hierarchization of the gods. In hymns, in contrast, the typical series of strung-together epithets make it possible to also juxtapose the names of gods, who are thus very tangibly identified with one another, without need for explanation, more by mystical intuition than by logical reasoning.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Herrero 2010a: 317.

¹¹⁷ Herrero 2010a: 318.

This distinction between two henotheistic tendencies, one more intuitive (here defined as ‘mystically intuitive’) and another one characterised by a ‘logical reasoning’ seems to correspond to the two different kinds of beliefs that I have previously mentioned and that we will be able to trace to the various Orphic sources I will analyse in the next chapters of this thesis. As a matter of fact, what is important to underline here is the pattern that could be identified to examine the Orphic fragments which are considered to show henotheistic hints. I will then examine in depth the attitude of the poet(s) or worshippers that composed the poems or sang the hymns in order to try to understand what kind of belief may lie behind that particular religious expression. As has just been seen, Orphic sources show different kinds of possible henotheistic tendencies, also depending on (and influenced by) the literary genre in which they are conveyed.

Furthermore, in a study on divine figures in the *Orphic Hymns*,¹¹⁸ Morand focuses on two deities (Eubouleus and Hipta) one of whom appears to be an exemplification of what we have just observed about a syncretistic, centripetal tendency to unify the divine in non-reflective forms of worship.¹¹⁹ However, Herrero comments that it is also possible to find cases, such as the *Hymn to Zeus* contained in the Derveni Theogony and in the *Rhapsodies*, in which the two genres previously mentioned (that is the theogonic and the hymnic ones) happen to be combined. Indeed, here, the mythological episode of the inclusion of the entire universe by Zeus narrated in the theogonies “is transformed in the hands of the Orphic poet into the justification for the absolute centrality of a single god, Zeus, to whom the theogony at this point dedicates a hymn”.¹²⁰ It will be, then, extremely interesting to look into these sources to try to analyse them in light of these introductory observations and preliminary attempts of ‘categorisation’. As we have just noticed, Herrero explicitly uses the term ‘henotheism’ to

¹¹⁸ Morand 1997.

¹¹⁹ Morand 1997: 172-173.

¹²⁰ Herrero 2010a: 318.

define the tendency also present in Orphic sources and contexts to give primacy to one god among the many, whose supremacy is acclaimed in hymns or narrated in theogonies and theological texts. Nevertheless, other scholars have questioned the use of this term and prefer to use other more specific terminologies.

Italian scholar Ugo Bianchi, for example, when trying to define the unique Orphic conception of divine entity, makes reference to the *Hymn to Zeus* and introduces the term ‘theopantism’. Indeed, the author stresses the features of this particular deity placing the emphasis on his inclusiveness and comprehensiveness, along with his ‘totality’ in terms of both space and time.¹²¹ The god is, in fact, at the base of all things in a metaphysical and ontological way. Zeus is thus both transcendent and immanent, defined by the scholar as a ‘cosmic god’¹²² as he has also specified:

Un dio fondato iconologicamente sulla corrispondenza macrocosmo-microcosmo (il cosmo come macroantropo); un dio che ‘è’ il cosmo, grande organismo articolato e vivente, eterno e in movimento; ma che è il cosmo non secondo un concetto di panteismo volgare, che divinizzi gli elementi visti nella loro immediata materialità, bensì secondo l’idea per cui le membra del dio, corrispondenti alle zone del cosmo, sono piuttosto la sostanza (in senso etimologico) divina di queste medesime e del cosmo nella sua totalità. Una concezione in cui immanenza e trascendenza si combinano in modo originale [...].¹²³

As has been pointed out by the scholar, it is important to stress right from the beginning that the Orphic perception or ‘conception’ of a one god which we shall analyse in the course of this dissertation (be it henotheistic, theopantistic or other) should not be considered merely

¹²¹ Bianchi uses the image of the *macranthropos* to describe this god: “Nell’affermazione che Zeus è il primo ed ultimo echeggia il concetto di una compiutezza, di una ‘rotondità’, che è quella del gran ciclo del tempo. Ma vi è anche una totalità in senso spaziale, e per esprimerla interviene la [...] concezione del *macranthropos* (‘grande uomo’ o ‘uomo cosmico’), con le sue corrispondenze anatomico-cosmologiche, sebbene nel nostro testo il termine *kephalè* indichi piuttosto ‘l’inizio’ che non ‘la testa’ in senso concreto, un inizio che è anche medietà (μέσση) e compimento [...]” (Bianchi 1975: 255).

¹²² Bianchi 1975: 255. Betegh also entitles one of the sections of his volume on the Derveni papyrus ‘The cosmic god’ (Betegh 2004: 182-223).

¹²³ Bianchi 1970: 99.

as pantheistic.¹²⁴ In fact, as seen in the *Hymn of Zeus* and in many other fragments, the divine entity (Zeus) represents the base and divine essence of everything without entirely identifying himself with it.¹²⁵ This delicate balance between transcendence and immanence, between being part of reality and nonetheless a supreme and separate manifestation of it, can be expressed in terms of ‘vertical roundness’ as in the case of the *Hymn to Zeus*. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that within this theopantistic conception which is, according to the scholars who embrace this terminology, specific to Orphic contexts, the plurality of other traditional gods is not excluded but connected to the original unity of Zeus, who happens to be at the centre of both *cosmos* and history, confluence of wisdom and power.¹²⁶ Betegh provided a definition of the Orphic cosmic god of the Derveni Papyrus observing that:

Perhaps even more important is the issue of plurality versus unity. [...] The story of swallowing is probably the most important contribution from the side of the mythological discourse to this question – which is, at least according to some, the major theme during the sixth and fifth centuries. Under this heading, the swallowing episode offers the striking image of the one Zeus containing the entire plurality of all the other beings. In the sphere of theology it shows that the Universal Zeus can ‘physically’ contain all the divine beings of the world, and thus the other gods can symbolically be identified with Zeus. The individual identities of the other gods are temporarily suspended, since they have been absorbed in the unique cosmic god [...].¹²⁷

Bianchi’s opposition to the generic use of the term ‘pantheism’ to refer to the Orphic view of a ‘one’ god comes from previous reflections about this topic, one of which is to be found in William Guthrie’s first volume of the series *A History of Greek Philosophy*.¹²⁸ In the chapter

¹²⁴ For a definition of the term ‘pantheism’, the origins of its use and different applications in various contexts, see Hinnells 1984: 245; Hartshorne 2005. See also Bianchi 1970: 99-100 and 1975: 253-261 along with the bibliography cited in those papers.

¹²⁵ Bianchi 1975: 257.

¹²⁶ Bernabé 2009: 63.

¹²⁷ Betegh 2004: 220-221.

¹²⁸ Guthrie 1962 and, before that, in Guthrie 1950: 316.

about Milesian philosophers, the scholar observes that the problem of the relation between ‘the one’ and ‘the many’ is at the heart of both Orphic and pre-Socratic thought:

It is primarily a religious assumption, not one which appealed to the inheritors of the Olympian pantheon of Homer, but one which seems to have belonged particularly to the religious ferment that affected a different stratum of the population in the sixth century and gave rise to the sacred poetry known as Orphic. The promulgators of *teletai* in the name of Orpheus were concerned in the religious sphere with the same problem of the relation between the One and the Many which in a different form was the problem of the Milesian philosophers. In both forms it was a living problem in the sixth century.¹²⁹

In an article published in the *Harvard Theological Review*, Aryeh Finkelberg starts from Guthrie’s observations and analyses the theme of unity and the relation between the One and the Many in Milesian philosophers and Orphic sources. Here the scholar observes that, while for the Milesians the centre is more the ‘microcosmic’ form of the problem, for the Orphics the main focus is the ‘macrocosmic’ side of it.¹³⁰ According to the author, who focuses for example on the text of the Derveni papyrus and of the *Rhapsodies*, the Orphic problem is both diachronic (Zeus originates the universe and the other gods) and synchronic (in swallowing and creating the universe he partly identifies with it). To explain this conception Finkelberg uses the term ‘pantheism’, arguing that “the Milesians and Orphics shared a pantheistic idea and combined it with a ‘historical’ view of the universe: pantheism was cosmogonical in the Milesians and theogonical in the Orphics”.¹³¹ The author then goes on to comment about microcosmic visions of the One-Many problem both in pre-Socratic and Orphic contexts, focusing on the status of the soul and the communion with the divine.¹³² In order to clarify his statements about pantheism in Orphic reflections on unity, the scholar argues that:

¹²⁹ Guthrie 1962: 132.

¹³⁰ Finkelberg 1986: 325. On the macrocosm-microcosm opposition see also Guthrie 1950: 316-317.

¹³¹ Finkelberg 1986: 325.

¹³² Finkelberg 1986: 332.

though formally differing in their vision of the divine and our relation to it, the Orphics and the Milesians experienced the world precisely in the same way, and this experience was essentially mystical. They envisaged the universe as permeated with the divine and strived to join it. They sought direct and immediate association with the deity in sharing the deity's experience -the Orphics, by imitating this experience in mysteries revealed by Orpheus [...] They hoped to eventually be united with the deity for eternity as a reward for living a life of devotion and self-discipline.¹³³

This is a clear example of an analysis which considers the 'one' god of some Orphic sources as a signal of a generic pantheism, in which the god permeates reality and wholly identifies with it. Even though some aspects of these theories may be embraced, such as the focus on the divine oneness and the relation with this divine of the participants to the Orphic mysteries (first highlighted by Guthrie), one should be careful to define this complex Orphic conception as generically 'pantheistic'. As we have previously seen with the observations of Ugo Bianchi, the matter appears to require a more specific and subtle terminology which takes into consideration the different aspects of this elaborate religious tendency.

Another term which has been used to define the Orphic tendency to give prominence to one single god among others is monism. In fact, also Herrero de Jáuregui utilises (but less often) this terminology along with 'henotheism', and the word appears to be preferred in philosophical and theo-cosmogonic contexts especially when considering the birth of the universe. Julia Mendoza, for instance, analyses Orphic poets' attempts to give an explanation of the diversity and multiplicity of the universe originating from a unity, thus elaborating a 'monist theory' of the universe.¹³⁴ Making reference to the cosmogony contained in the Derveni Papyrus, the scholar argues to be able to identify a 'personal monism' according to which:

at a culminating point of the cosmogonic process, Zeus appears as only god, and the only existing thing. The whole universe, which he would recreate himself further on, albeit

¹³³ Finkelberg 1986: 333.

¹³⁴ Mendoza 2011: 29.

in order, stemming from himself, is absorbed in him. Zeus is, therefore, an immanent divinity.¹³⁵

Before Mendoza, also Alderink had defined this particular cosmogonic and cosmologic framework as ‘monistic’, adding some clarifications about the supreme divine figure of Zeus which recall Bianchi’s observations on the theopantistic deity:

The creative activity of Zeus accounts for the genesis of the world; Zeus ‘exteriorised’ himself and the world was the product. On the one hand, Zeus is ‘in’ the world in much the same way that a parent is in a child, since both Zeus and the world have a common structure. The relationship between Zeus and the world is one of continuity. On the other hand, there is a strong dissimilarity between Zeus and the world, since Zeus is the ἀρχός of the world, both in the sense of origin and in the sense of governing what he has created.¹³⁶

The matter is of great importance in order to better understand Orphic complex henotheistic tendencies, and after having here introduced these issues I will deepen my analysis in the next chapters. Indeed, the different ways in which the one god emerges from the polytheistic structure in Orphic sources is fundamental, and one important step will be to examine the delicate balance between immanence and transcendence which often characterises the ‘one’ god in Orphic sources.

Lastly, it is worth introducing here the analysis of Alberto Bernabé, which may help us in drawing final conclusions about these first reflections on Orphic henotheism. The author, who has very much focused on Orphism, analyses the role of Zeus in the *Hymn to Zeus*, and in the analysis of the Derveni Papyrus defines its divine figure as “absolute king and successor of himself, but also as the centre of the history of the universe, after having assumed in himself the first creation and having become the demiurge of the second and definitive

¹³⁵ Mendoza 2011: 31.

¹³⁶ Alderink 1981: 35-36. A reference to monism regarding Orphic Zeus can be found also in other commentaries of the Derveni Papyrus, such as the one of Marisa Tortorelli Ghidini (Tortorelli Ghidini 2006: 170).

world creation, which follows rational principles”.¹³⁷ The hymn contained in the papyrus indeed describes the powerful sovereignty of Zeus, who is represented as self-sufficient (αὐτός).¹³⁸ It is worth noticing here that Bernabé, analysing this passage, focuses on the figure of Zeus as ἀρχή and ἀρχός, at the same time origin (first in a sort of hierarchical and theogonical order) and ruler.¹³⁹ Indeed, the author observes that

the delight in the ambiguities of language is characteristic of the author of the Orphic poem. Since ἀρχή means also ‘beginning’, Orpheus suggests that Zeus takes the ἀρχή from Kronos in two senses, in a hierarchical one (he becomes ‘the first’, that is, ‘the king’ of gods) and also in a strictly temporal order, since immediately after he is going to go back in time [...]. Zeus seizes power and, at the same time, the ability to be the first in time. He also achieves the strength to exert power.¹⁴⁰

What is highlighted by the scholar seems to be not only the relationship of the ‘one’ Orphic god with the universe¹⁴¹ but also, even if maybe in a more subtle way, the relationship between this one god and the plurality of gods typical of the polytheistic structure.¹⁴²

In one of his articles focused on the divine in later Orphism, Bernabé concentrates again on gods with a special prominence (Zeus, Dionysos, Helios-Apollo). Here he observes a tendency to unify the divine in a way that I have previously defined as ‘syncretistic’ and that seems to suggest a henotheistic approach to the supernatural.¹⁴³ As a matter of fact, Bernabé concludes that in later Orphism this tendency to unity “may lead to an image of Zeus as

¹³⁷ Bernabé 2007b: 124-125.

¹³⁸ Fr. 243 F [69+168 K.], 5-7.

¹³⁹ Bernabé 2009: 64.

¹⁴⁰ Bernabé 2007b: 103-104.

¹⁴¹ Which was at the heart, as we have seen, of Bianchi’s analysis (see Bianchi 1970).

¹⁴² See Bernabé 2009: 58-61, as well as the bibliography cited in those pages.

¹⁴³ Bernabé 2010c: 440. Here the scholar also points out that this henotheistic tendency always resides in the boundaries of the traditional polytheistic structure, never deviating towards monotheism with the exception of the *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus* which is, however, deeply influenced by Jewish claims.

supreme god who oscillates between creator god and cosmic demiurge, on the one hand, and a deity identified with the universe, on the other hand”.¹⁴⁴

It has been therefore interesting to observe in this introductory section how various scholars have approached the theme of the ‘one’ god of Orphic henotheism in different ways, drawing attention either to the process of the ‘creation’ of the universe, to the relation of this god with reality or with other gods. As we have seen, the kind of texts we are reading (hymns, theogonies) should also be taken into consideration as well as the kind of belief they reflect (intuitive, reflective), thus being able to understand more fully the henotheistic idea which they convey. To conclude, it will be the aim of this thesis not to impose a full system of the categories cited in this section (typologies such as henotheism, theopantism, monism) onto all the different Orphic sources, but rather to observe and clarify different situations and contexts.

1.6 The Debate Around the So-called ‘Pagan Monotheism’

The term ‘pagan monotheism’, used to refer to alleged forms of monotheism¹⁴⁵ supposedly traceable to religious expressions in Late Antiquity, has been at the heart of scholarly discussion mainly since its first significant appearance¹⁴⁶ during a seminar held at Oxford in Hilary Term in 1996, from which a volume originated with the title *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, published in 1999 and edited by Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede.¹⁴⁷ Since then, many scholars have decided to use this terminology.¹⁴⁸ I will

¹⁴⁴ Bernabè 2010b: 440.

¹⁴⁵ For an excursus on the birth and use of the term ‘monotheism’, which we will not here discuss, see Kenney 1986; Bloch 2000; Assmann 2004; Tommasi Moreschini 2006: 91 n.1; Sfameni Gasparro 2009: 54 n.4.

¹⁴⁶ Chiara O. Tommasi Moreschini, however, has observed that the critical debate around the theme of divine unity and uniqueness in Late Antiquity actually dates back to the 19th century (Tommasi Moreschini 2006: 91).

¹⁴⁷ Athanassiadi-Frede 1999.

¹⁴⁸ The term ‘monotheism’ is also used in this field of research by, among others, Kenney 1986; Frede 1999 and 2010; West 1999; Fürst 2010; North 2010; Siniossoglu 2010; van Nuffelen 2010a.

here try to give an account of these positions, then moving on to analyse some critical remarks¹⁴⁹ originated by this work.¹⁵⁰

The volume starts with an introduction written by the two editors in which they outline the structure of the book but, before that, give an account of the chronological framework and of the choice of terminology made by the authors of the various articles contained in the volume. The first terminology they give an explanation of is the term ‘pagan’ (*paganus*), which they consider to have somehow intrinsically negative connotations and whose use they question. However, after having discussed the alternative use of the terms ‘heathen’ and ‘Hellene’, they continue to use the term ‘pagan’ although with some reservations.¹⁵¹

The editors then start the discussion of the crucial word of the title and of the book in general, which is the term ‘monotheism’. After having critically explained the theory of the alleged passage from polytheism to monotheism which dates back to the early Christian commentators, Athanassiadi and Frede introduce the theme of the compatibility between monotheism and polytheistic structures, providing some initial examples such as the Stoic *Hymn to Zeus* of Cleanthes and the Orphic one, or Platonic sources.¹⁵² The authors defend the

¹⁴⁹ See Edwards 2000a; Cerutti 2003, 2009 and 2010; Sfameni Gasparro 2003a, 2009 and 2010; Tommasi Moreschini 2006.

¹⁵⁰ Sfameni Gasparro (2003: 124-125), after having examined in depth the features of the one God typical of monotheistic contexts and those of the supreme god typical of (henotheistic) pagan contexts, has rightly observed that “Ne risulta la legittimità di circoscrivere sotto il profilo della tipologia storico-religiosa tali posizioni, che riflettono la nozione di una ‘monarchia’ divina, in quanto contemplanò un dio sommo, percepito come sovrano all’interno di una articolata e graduata serie di potenze anch’esse divine cui vengono demandati compiti necessari al funzionamento della vita umana e cosmica, riconosciute come oggetto di culto e identificate con le personalità dei pantheon tradizionali. Esse si distinguono, già nella percezione dei loro portatori, da posizioni quali quelle giudaiche e cristiane in cui il Dio ‘uno’ è anche ‘unico’ e rifiuta di essere incluso in uno scenario di entità più o meno personali, a lui omologhe sotto il profilo della natura. Per queste ultime può essere allora utilizzata la categoria definitoria di ‘monoteismi’, nella piena consapevolezza del condizionamento culturale e ideologico di questa categoria, con rifiuto di ogni giudizio di valore o peggio di pretese ‘normative’ di una siffatta definizione”. See also Cerutti 2009: 323-324 and 2010; Sfameni Gasparro 2010a.

¹⁵¹ Athanassiadi-Frede 1999: 4-7.

¹⁵² Athanassiadi-Frede 1999: 8.

use of this terminology from the very beginning, so that they are able to argue, referring to what I have previously defined as a vertical henotheistic tendency, that “the grading of celestial powers allowed the traditional gods of Graeco-Roman paganism to form part of an essentially monotheistic structure”.¹⁵³

Although I will not analyse all the chapters in detail, it is worth mentioning here that an outline is given about the different examples of pagan monotheistic forms in Late Antiquity: monistic elements in Gnosticism and Hermetism that would thus tend to a monotheistic religious view; an alleged monotheistic theology of the Chaldean Oracles; the cult of Theos Hypsistos that I have previously cited and that would have been the origin of a religious movement (the Hypsistarians) characterised by a ‘monotheistic culture’;¹⁵⁴ the alleged monotheistic tendency of the proconsul Praetextatus in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*.¹⁵⁵ The editors’ ‘temporary’ conclusion is rather strong, since the argument is expressed in the terms that “not only philosophers, but a very substantial portion of Late Antique pagans was consciously monotheistic”,¹⁵⁶ and that Christians did not have an exclusive ‘monopoly’ on monotheistic claims at the time.

These introductory considerations about the use of a certain terminology might sometimes appear characterised by a kind of deconstructionism and seem moved, on the one hand, by a strong tendency to be ‘politically correct’¹⁵⁷ (see the criticism on the use of the term ‘pagan’)¹⁵⁸ and, on the other hand, by an excessive freedom with the use of the term ‘monotheism’ and ‘monotheistic’. Many scholars have questioned the use of the term ‘pagan monotheism’, giving preference to the use of the terminology that we have previously discussed and of the term ‘henotheism’. However, as we have seen, the term ‘henotheism’

¹⁵³ Athanassiadi-Frede 1999: 9.

¹⁵⁴ Athanassiadi-Frede 1999: 17.

¹⁵⁵ Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.17.2.

¹⁵⁶ Athanassiadi-Frede 1999: 20.

¹⁵⁷ See Tommasi Moreschini 2006: 91.

¹⁵⁸ See Sfameni Gasparro 2003a: 101.

should not be utilised indifferently but trying to differentiate the various henotheistic tendencies and forms. In fact, as Cerutti has pointed out, the use of the term ‘henotheism’ while meeting the needs of a careful comparative analysis and critically opposing the category of ‘pagan monotheism’, at the same time risks covering too wide a range of religious tendencies.¹⁵⁹ That is why I tried to analyse the complexities of this phenomenon in the first part of this chapter.

I would now like to proceed with a quick analysis of the first chapter of the volume. The first contribution is by M.L. West who, in his *Towards Monotheism*, after having briefly defined monotheism as the ‘belief in only one God’- as well as the term ‘god’-¹⁶⁰ backs the theory that

Monotheism may seem a stark antithesis to polytheism, but there was no abrupt leap from the one to the other. No one, so far as we know, suddenly had the revolutionary idea that it would be economical to assume a single god responsible for everything rather than a plurality of gods. Where we see a god emerging as plenipotentary, the existence of other gods is not denied, but they are reduced in importance or status, and he is praised as the greatest among them.¹⁶¹

Although the scholar admits that this phenomenon is sometimes called ‘henotheism’, he believes it to be able to be defined as ‘monotheistic’, as well as that it is possible to find echoes of polytheistic elements in the Hebrew Bible. Definitions such as monotheism and polytheism would then, according to West, become provisional and vague. West therefore proposes different examples of this alleged ‘monotheistic’ tendency (which I would call ‘henotheistic’): he quotes Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* in which Zeus is presented as a Master Mind, while in the philosophical milieu he analyses the positions of the Presocratics (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes) and Xenophanes, whose statements about the εἷς θεός, the One

¹⁵⁹ See Cerutti 2009: 327-328.

¹⁶⁰ That is, “an entity identified or postulated [...] as a wilful agent possessing or exercising power over events that appear to be beyond human control or not governed by other intelligible agencies” (West 1999: 21).

¹⁶¹ West 1999: 24.

God, would sound like a ‘declaration of monotheism’.¹⁶² As we have seen before, however, we should be careful in calling Xenophanes a ‘monotheist’: West specifies, both for Xenophanes and later for Heraclitus, that their monotheism is ‘confused’ by the reference to other gods but this does not seem to prevent him from continuing using the terminology linked to monotheism.

In fact, and this is particularly significant for the aim of my research, the scholar proceeds with the analysis focusing on Orphic poems and noticeably citing the famous verses of the *Hymn to Zeus* (here in the version of what West calls ‘the Protogonos Theogony’):

Ζεὺς πρῶτος [γένετο, Ζεὺς] ὕστατος [ἀργικέραυνος]·
 Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ’ ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται] · [...]·
 Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς δ’ ἀρχὸς πάντων ἀργικέραυνος.¹⁶³

Zeus was born first, Zeus last, god of the bright bolt:
 Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle, from Zeus are all things made...
 Zeus is the king, Zeus the ruler of all, god of the bright bolt.¹⁶⁴

While we shall see that this passage (among others) may be seen as an example of what I call Orphic henotheism or theopantism, West considers it a significant exemplification of pagan monotheism. Indeed, even though he recognises that the Orphic theogony in which the Hymn is included cannot be considered monotheistic,¹⁶⁵ he argues that the other gods lost their status and “all become creatures and emanations of Zeus, after an episode in which he was temporarily the only god”.¹⁶⁶ Zeus thus becomes, in line with the orientation of all the contributions to the volume, a perfect example of a pagan monotheistic attitude which tends

¹⁶² West 1999: 33. West next admits, however, that Xenophanes goes on to say ‘the greatest among gods and men’, so that the One god is not the only one that exists.

¹⁶³ Fr. 14 F.

¹⁶⁴ Transl. West 1999: 35.

¹⁶⁵ “Now, a theogony by definition relates the births of a whole series of gods; one cannot have a monotheistic theogony” (West 1999: 34).

¹⁶⁶ West 1999: 35.

to monotheism and which would have later inspired, according to the scholar, also Empedocles' theological speculation.

After having analysed Anaxagoras' and Diogenes of Apollonia's positions, the scholar quickly makes reference to Herodotus and the tragic corpus, claiming that

Because of the force of tradition there was no hurry to discard polytheistic language, and yet there was a general disposition to see the divine regimen as unified and purposeful. This was a situation in which monotheism could develop without causing upset.¹⁶⁷

West eventually concludes that it is possible to trace a tendency among philosophers (starting from the Pre-Socratics) to identify a divine hierarchy led by a single supreme divine entity, and among writers of the fifth century to think of a unitary and unified divine, referred to as *ὁ θεός* or *τὸ θεῖον*. To end his analysis the scholar claims that

It was a small step from here to dogmatic monotheism; but there was no pressure or haste to take that step. People are slow to adjust their religion to their philosophy.¹⁶⁸

Even though it is certainly worth taking into consideration West's important contribution especially for what concerns the analysis of the different authors, it seems difficult to embrace his theory of considering all the passages quoted in his article (including the Orphic ones) as steps towards monotheism, and to apply this terminology to such complex texts and contexts. Furthermore, although it is true that the author is always careful in using conclusive statements, his analysis appears to be deeply influenced by the alleged monotheistic tendency which I would be more inclined to define as henotheistic.

As I have briefly commented before, the use of the term 'monotheistic' is generally referred in this volume to religious hierarchical contexts, not only by West but also, for example, by Athanassiadi who, in the chapter about the Chaldean Oracles, argues that

¹⁶⁷ West 1999: 39.

¹⁶⁸ West 1999: 40.

By integrating into one pyramidal monotheistic structure their local gods through the complementary process of syncretism and hierarchization, Hellenism prepared the ground for the reception of another monotheism [...].¹⁶⁹

The term ‘monotheistic’ is evidently here being applied to what I have previously defined as two ‘henotheistic’ tendencies, that is one vertical towards hierarchisation and one centripetal and syncretistic. Athanassiadi appears to easily apply the ‘category’ of monotheism to various contexts which we should maybe more carefully analyse and differentiate.

It is therefore not just a matter of distinguishing between ‘historical’ monotheisms and henotheism (here defined as ‘pagan monotheism’) but also of differentiating between diverse kinds of henotheism, depending on the type of tendency and the type of approach (philosophical and reflective, noncommittal, intuitive). It thus appears reductive and restricting to use a terminology so deeply linked to Jewish and Christian theologies characterised by a divine uniqueness which cannot be ultimately found in henotheistic formulations. And it is not only about divine uniqueness:¹⁷⁰ other features of religious tendencies that are usually recognised as being properly ‘monotheistic’ are, for example, a radical transcendence, the notion of creation and a personalistic conception, all characteristics that cannot be found in most of what I would call ‘henotheistic’ manifestations.¹⁷¹

I therefore believe that the use of ‘categories’ and terminologies such as henotheism, monotheism, paganism, should be neither denigrated nor abused. Indeed, terms such as ‘paganism’ or ‘polytheism’, deeply rooted in the scientific literature, are associated with particular features of religious phenomena that share common typologies, and we may

¹⁶⁹ Athanassiadi – Frede 1999: 181.

¹⁷⁰ Cerutti notably points out that historic-religious research is interested not only in the ‘numerical’ difference between the One and the Many, but also in the possible ways in which the One or the Many are represented (Cerutti 2003: 195).

¹⁷¹ See Sfameni Gasparro 2003a: 124-125; Cerutti 2009: 323.

therefore continue to (carefully) use them. On the other hand, the use of the term ‘monotheism’ should not be abused, as we have just seen, since in trying to show its ‘concrete’ applications to the three main analogous monotheistic religions¹⁷² we can observe how the features of the One God (e.g. exclusivism, individualism and universalism)¹⁷³ are not applicable to pagan contexts, however focused on one specific god they may be.

Following Athanassiadi and Frede’s volume, another collection of papers was published in 2010 by Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen with the title *One god: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, derived from a conference held in 2006 at the University of Exeter precisely about the theme of so-called ‘pagan monotheism’ in the Roman empire.¹⁷⁴ The conference, as well as the volume, concentrates on defining the term and the use of the expression ‘pagan monotheism’, and then on its religious and socio-cultural context. Contrary to the 1999 book, this volume focuses on the pre-Constantinian period of the Roman empire and widens the range of documentary sources analysed, providing alleged evidence of the emerging of monotheistic patterns in Late Antiquity’s Graeco-Roman societies.

Michael Frede, for example, questionably believes it to be possible to distinctly identify “not just a tendency towards monotheism in Greek religion and Greek religious thought, clearly observable for instance in the Derveni author of the fourth century BC, but that this tendency evolved into one or another form of monotheism [...]”.¹⁷⁵ However, not all of the papers agree in the use of the monotheistic terminology, and the volume appears to be a

¹⁷² These present, however, similarities and differences among themselves; Sfameni Gasparro (2003: 106), has indeed offered the possibility to talk about ‘monotheisms’, that are concrete historical religious contexts that present analogies but need to be differentiated to be properly analysed.

¹⁷³ See Sfameni Gasparro 2009: 60.

¹⁷⁴ Mitchell–van Nuffelen 2010a.

¹⁷⁵ Frede 2010: 54. Frede discusses in his paper the birth and use of the term ‘monotheism’ and its possible application to pagan contexts. He is firmly convinced that it is possible to talk about pagan monotheism and considers three cases (three philosophers - Antisthenes, Chrysippus and Galen) representative of three examples of monotheistic manifestations in antiquity.

useful tool to approach the debate around pagan monotheism, providing different perspectives (and challenges) on the issue for our enquiry. The final result seems to be the attempt to stimulate a constructive debate about the complexity of religious phenomena in the first centuries CE, implying innovations, renovations and cross-fertilisations.

The most relevant contribution for the aim of this research is the one of Peter van Nuffelen who, in his paper *Pagan Monotheism as a Religious Phenomenon*, discusses theoretical problems about the use of a ‘strongly valued’¹⁷⁶ terminology such as the one related to monotheism. The scholar therefore analyses possible alternatives to this terminology that have been hypothesised in the attempt to reach a higher level of objectivity, such as the use of specific words already present in the literature (e.g. henotheism), the coinage of new words (e.g. megatheism) or the adding of some qualifications to better justify the use of the term monotheism (e.g. inclusive monotheism). For what concerns the use of the term henotheism, the author believes it to be rather vague, imprecise and confusing (though not completely useless), arguing that the term cannot claim to be a more objective alternative to monotheism.¹⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, van Nuffelen concludes justifying the use of the term arguing that

The field of religious studies has a wide terminological variety on offer, which allows us to describe the phenomena with some degree of precision. As far as the exact definition of the terms is concerned, the study of monotheisms has only a relative chaos to offer. This may be experienced as a disadvantage and incite one to coin new concepts. Yet, even then we will continue to need a general terminology in order to be able to describe phenomena and to communicate with other scholars. Here the term ‘monotheism’ can find its justification, understood as a common denominator for various phenomena.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Van Nuffelen 2010: 17.

¹⁷⁷ Van Nuffelen 2010: 19.

¹⁷⁸ Van Nuffelen 2010: 20-21.

Van Nuffelen's analysis appears to be extremely useful since it stresses the relevance of the methods of the inquiry, such as the dangers of a ritualistic or, on the opposite side, a theological approach, and the importance of a scientific and accurate study of the diverse sources. However, it seems difficult to embrace the author's view on pagan monotheism,¹⁷⁹ precisely because the use of this terminology implies a series of features and characteristics that I find hard to trace to such complex and various pagan sources and contexts.

The second paper of the volume that I would like to analyse here is the one by John North entitled *Pagan Ritual and Monotheism*.¹⁸⁰ In his contribution North discusses the use of the terms 'monotheism' and 'polytheism' (in line with the contents of the volume) especially with regard to the transformation(s) that occurred in Late Antiquity which, according to the author, cannot be reduced to the 'simple' process from paganism to Christian monotheism in which one stage would be so-called 'pagan monotheism'. The scholar appears to reject this simplistic theory of an alleged evolution towards monotheism by showing how the idea of a single deity being a supreme force or entity is not new to pagan worshippers,¹⁸¹ and by reporting a list of complex and intertwined changes that occurred in the first centuries CE and that cannot be limited to the reduction of the number of gods such as the roles of ritual, beliefs and professions (creeds) in religious lives, the belonging of the individuals to a religious group, the relationship between the individual and religious authorities.¹⁸² The analysis carried out by North takes into consideration many elements and tries to give account of the fact that many factors were implied in the religious transformations that occurred in the first centuries CE. When trying to differentiate the numerous transformations that took place at that time, North seems to distance his research from the

¹⁷⁹ Van Nuffelen 2010: 33.

¹⁸⁰ North 2010.

¹⁸¹ Furthermore, North criticises the notion implied in this theory that religion is a by-product of philosophy and theology (North 2010: 41-42).

¹⁸² For the complete list and detailed analysis see North 2010: 42-45.

use of the term pagan monotheism. When talking about these religious transformations, the author tries to reframe the issue quoting the possible use of the term ‘henotheism’ as an alternative to the reference to ‘monotheistic’ terminology:

suppose we were trying to construct a religious revolution which took place not between traditional paganism and newly emergent monotheistic or dualistic faiths, but between two or more rival versions of polytheism, we should virtually be obliged to perceive them as selecting from amongst the available pagan deities and prioritising selected individuals, to whom specific characteristics would need to be ascribed: it is here that the phenomenon usually now called henotheism comes into the picture. This is another modern term of debate, devised to describe a situation where one of the pagan deities is privileged over the others.¹⁸³

Even though North seems sceptical about the use of the term ‘henotheism’, his analysis appears to be useful to highlight the complexities that are hidden behind the comparison between monotheistic features and pagan beliefs (intuitive or reflective), a relationship which should maybe not be confined to simplistic ‘monotheistic’ labels and categories.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, the author often draws attention to the importance of distinguishing between ritual and belief, and the relevance that these two elements had in both polytheistic and monotheistic contexts (in different periods of time), an aspect which I believe is of great importance in analysing the topic of the different forms of religious expression in which one deity is placed at the centre of a specific cult, reflection or (in the case of Christianity) creed.

I would now like to add a few final comments on the matter. As Tommasi Moreschini has significantly pointed out,¹⁸⁵ in fact, it is true that numerous pagan sources show a gradually

¹⁸³ North 2010: 49-50.

¹⁸⁴ North concludes that “monotheism in any strict sense is not a necessary condition for the religious transformations we are seeking to analyse; [...] secondly, that some degree of simplification of the complexities of traditional pagan practice was a necessary but not sufficient condition for those transformations to take place” (North 2010: 51).

¹⁸⁵ Tommasi Moreschini 2006: 98. In her analysis the scholar (Tommasi Moreschini 2006) focuses on the Imperial period but also draws conclusions that apply to my research as well, discussing a tendency which can be traced, indeed, to classical Greece.

growing syncretistic tendency, both in ritual and philosophical contexts, characterised by the focus on one single deity, transcendent but at the same time involved in the creation and guarantor of the order of the universe. However, it should also be noticed that ‘strictly’ monotheistic beliefs, partly similar to the henotheistic tendencies that have been cited in this section on ‘pagan monotheism’, do not allow divine nature to be divided into different entities or manifestations (not to mention the personalistic and universalistic features of the One God of the Jewish or Christian tradition). This seems to be precisely the point, as even the ‘most’ syncretistic or hierarchic henotheistic tendencies (such as some theological or philosophical speculative formulations) appear to be deeply polytheistic and unable to conceive a fully unified and unique divine nature.

I am thus inclined to distance myself from the use of a ‘strong’ terminology linked to monotheism to refer to different pagan contexts, since monotheisms *stricto sensu* could be described in terms of a negation of the many in favour of the One, more than the reduction of the many into one. This process appears to be, therefore, not an evolution from polytheism to monotheism but a radical negation.¹⁸⁶

The terminology used in this analysis reflects the use of certain conventional categories (or, better, typologies) that cannot, however, be overly exploited or used in a too generic way. The need to differentiate various contexts and sources should be, indeed, a primary necessity when analysing complex topics such as religious perceptions and conceptions of a one god over the centuries. Diverse terms such as henotheism (with its different connotations), monotheism, polytheism help us throw light on the issue, thanks to their being typologies “certainly not of a normative nature, *a priori* to study, but rather of a descriptive nature, with an historical foundation formulated *a posteriori*, on the basis of positive-inductive investigation”.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Tommasi Moreschini 2006: 99.

¹⁸⁷ Sfameni Gasparro 2009: 59.

2. Orphic Henotheism and Christianity

In this chapter I am going to analyse the early Christian reception of the Orphic henotheistic sources that I will deal with in my dissertation. Indeed, since many of the sources that will be examined are transmitted in Late Antique texts and apologetic works, it is worth considering how these texts have come to us and through which lens they have been read in the first centuries CE. To do so, I will first illustrate an overview of the relationship that occurred between Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity, focussing on the different apologetic strategies that may be found when examining the Christian reception of Orphic sources. I will then proceed with the analysis of the main Christian apologists that dealt with Orphic henotheistic sources, namely the *De Monarchia* and *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, Cyril, Clement, Theodoret, Eusebius and the *Theosophia Tubingensis*.

It is worth noting that most of the sources I will deal with in the third chapter of this dissertation (texts on the reflective side of the Orphic belief) are defined as ‘fragments’, but also that ‘fragments’ is how we describe them. The writers themselves presumably had access to (more) complete texts—at least some of them, as we shall see— and their quotations later became our fragments. This is why it is important, from a methodological point of view, to analyse the Christian reception of our sources, that is in order to better understand how and why these texts have come to us and how this may influence our reflections on the sources that we have at our disposal as well as on the image of Orpheus and Orphism that is conveyed.

2.1 Orphism and Christianity: Apologetic Strategies

This first section will introduce the theme of the relationship that occurred between Christianity and Orphism in the first centuries CE. As we shall see, while some Christian authors decided to use pagan sources in order to subdue them to the new doctrine, others rejected the idea of such a contact. First of all, it is necessary to underline that Orpheus had an important role which had a number of aspects within the Greek cultural environment, from which Christian authors draw many elements. On the one hand, he represents a figure of great prestige given the antiquity and authority attributed to the literary corpus ascribed to him. On the other, some of the features of this *mysteriosophy*¹⁸⁸ appear to be at the core of harsh condemnation.

It is also worth mentioning that the aim of Christian apologists was not always to present authentic material: their aim was to find and quote sources which could help them defend the new faith against charges made by pagans (in the case of early apologetic works) or to glorify Christianity. What was at the centre of these Christian authors' attention was the overall coherence and effectiveness of their works: the final text was intended to be logical and plausible, more than truthful.¹⁸⁹ Historical accuracy was therefore not a primary concern for the majority of the apologists we are going to analyse, and this – along with the fragmentary state of Orphic sources – constitutes one of the main problems when dealing with the Orphic corpus and its early reception. The very process of extrapolating and manipulating pagan texts reflects their attitude towards such texts, and ultimately results in altering and compromising our knowledge of those sources and the Orphic religious stream,

¹⁸⁸ With the term '*mysteriosophy*' I intend the union of a kind of knowledge with a certain religious practice, of a wisdom (*sophia*) with practical indications typical of mystery contexts and traditions. See Bianchi 1992: 274-277. For a discussion on this theme and bibliography see the introduction to this thesis, section 3.

¹⁸⁹ As Herrero argues, the aim was "the attainment of a balance between manipulation and plausibility" (Herrero 2010a: 224).

constituting the very essence of the study of the early reception of ancient sources. This is precisely why I have decided to place this chapter at the beginning of the discussion on henotheism in Orphic sources, that is in order to understand how these sources have come to us – and why this selection may influence our reflection and analysis of the texts.

Scholars have discussed a sort of ‘construction’ and ‘creation’ of paganism (Orphism, in our case) made by Christian authors who, selecting and modifying texts and their interpretations, shape a sort of literary dimension which would not always correspond to historical truth.¹⁹⁰ I would tend not to be so assertive in saying that paganism only exists as products of the apologists and of a Late Antique religious polemic. I do believe it is possible to analyse these sources as such and not only as a Christian by-product, although still bearing in mind the *caveat* of the Christian reception filter in order to understand the nature of the sources and their later manipulation. It is my opinion that the approach which will be adopted in this chapter and throughout the thesis, aimed at explaining how later interpretations can inform our own reading of Orphic texts, represents one of the most important contributions of this chapter to the study of Orphic fragments containing henotheistic expressions.

Back to our overview of the Christian reception: I should firstly say that during the initial phase of such reception Christian authors focused on defending the new faith from a doctrinal, ethical and political point of view, distancing their works from those elements which could associate Christianity and paganism. From the 4th-5th century CE, however, apologetic works became less aggressive and more encomiastic in tone thanks to the fact that Christianity had achieved imperial patronage, and therefore security from attack. A

¹⁹⁰ Herrero, for example, says that “Orphism’s role is equally significant in the construction of paganism in Christian authors. The image of Greek religion transmitted by their texts would endure for many centuries, during which Greek religion was seen as a unified assemblage of beliefs and cults whose only real linkage is their non-Christianity, of which Orpheus becomes the principal patron. However, this image is an artificial creation, the product of late-ancient religious polemic. Paganism only exists as such in opposition to Christianity and appears for the first time in the works of the apologists” (Herrero 2010a: 251).

clear example of such a trend is represented by Eusebius, who gradually gains confidence in supporting his argumentations against pagan authors starting from their very affirmations and contradictions.¹⁹¹ The chronological trend will then continue during the Middle Ages when all the different literary connotations linked with the figure of Orpheus (erased due to specific apologetic strategies which we will see later on in the course of this section) will experience a sort of revival, given the ultimate victory of Christianity over paganism. This is the case, for example, of the myth of Orpheus and Euridyce.¹⁹²

For the sake of clarity, I believe it to be possible to trace two main apologetic strategies towards Orphic henotheistic sources.¹⁹³ The first one is represented by adaptation and appropriation, according to which Orphism is used and sometimes altered in order to create a sort of parallelism with Christian material. This can mostly be observed in reflective belief contexts, such as the analysis of complex ideas and concepts through the use of shared lexical elements. Words such as *nomos*, the divine law that finds correspondence with the personified and divinised Orphic *nomos*,¹⁹⁴ *pneuma* and *logos*¹⁹⁵ play indeed a fundamental role in Greek vocabulary but are also found in specific Orphic texts, somehow possibly implying Orphic connotations in some specific mystery contexts. Part of the lexical range derived also

¹⁹¹ See later §2.4 and Cerutti (2015: 41-47) on Eusebius' attitude when quoting Porphyry's *Philosophia ex Oraculis*.

¹⁹² On the figure of Orpheus in the Middle Ages see Friedman 1970.

¹⁹³ See also Herrero 2010a: 219.

¹⁹⁴ The theorisation of the Law (divinised *Nomos*) which appears in the Orphic theogonies and hymns helps the Greek apologists to draw up the Christian concept of Law and the pagan *Nomos* (Herrero 2010a: 290-291).

¹⁹⁵ The Orphic connotation of the word *logos* was often associated with the written and oral heritage (ἱερὸς λόγος, παλαιὸς λόγος, ὀρφικὸς λόγος) or with the philosophy of Heraclitus, Plato and the Stoics (see Fattal 1998 and 2001). The 'challenge' undertaken by Christian authors was that of explaining the concept of the Incarnation of God in terms of Holy Trinity through a specific terminology that could clarify the (new) divine and creative nature of the *Logos*. Orpheus could therefore be chosen to show and explain the term *logos*, now divinized and personified in the figure of Christ. The enchanting power of Orpheus' song, capable of moving nature and human souls, is thus recalled to better clarify the purifying and vivifying power of the Christian *Logos* in Clem. *Protr.* 1.3-4 and 1.5.

from the Orphic tradition could then be used by the apologists in order to better explain to the pagan audience Christian concepts that were not familiar to them.¹⁹⁶

Another case of adaptation of Orphic henotheistic (and reflective) elements is that of the *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus*, the poem composed by an Alexandrian Jew around the 2nd century BCE in which Orpheus professes conversion to the one God of the Hebrew Bible and which we will analyse in the 5th chapter of this dissertation. The text is quoted in the *Cohortatio ad Graecos, De monarchia*, and by Eusebius and Clement in order to address the pagan audience, give prestige to the antiquity of monotheism and trace the old Greek *sophia* back to ancient Jewish wisdom. The role attributed to such a ‘monotheistic’ Orpheus, however, is that of adorning the Christian theological argument, certainly not supporting it under a dogmatical point of view. As Herrero observes:

It is an adornment with a great external effect and is one that enjoys enormous popularity among the apologists, since it presents paganism’s principal theologian as a defender of Christian truths. On the one hand, Orpheus lends prestige to these ideas in the eyes of those for whom the authority of the Bible is not sufficient; on the other, his individual conversion serves as a model for the conversion that the apologists aim to generalize.¹⁹⁷

The second apologetic strategy, common in the first centuries CE, was that of rejection and refusal of the mythical, literary and ritual Orphic heritage. We are here faced with two main attitudes, the first one being an open and direct criticism through accusations such as that of euhemerism, magic and superstition,¹⁹⁸ amorality or even theft from the Hebrew Bible. It is interesting to notice how the same accusations were also used by the pagans

¹⁹⁶ “In the Orphic milieu the *logos* also had undeniable value as the vehicle of oral and written tradition [...] fitting it to serve simultaneously as a pendant to and mold for the Christian Logos intended to replace it. Moreover, the identification of the Logos with song brought it near to its primordial meaning of ‘word’, closer to the biblical meaning, and the myth of the singer served as a letter of introduction to the Greeks for the healing and vivifying power of the biblical Logos” (Herrero 2010a: 288).

¹⁹⁷ Herrero 2010a: 245.

¹⁹⁸ See Henrichs 1970.

against the Christians. Indeed, Herrero observes that “the favorite mythical themes attacked by the apologists, the stories of sex and violence, were also common *topoi* of religious accusation. The charges of cannibalism and incest that had been directed against the Roman Bacchanalia and that formed part of the general imaginary about secret rituals were now directed against the Christians, and predictably, the Christians hinted at similar charges against the Greek mysteries [...]”.¹⁹⁹ Literary *topoi* may therefore be used against Jews, as Flavius Josephus illustrates,²⁰⁰ Christians²⁰¹ and pagan mystery rites, as in Clement’s *Protrepticus*.²⁰²

Besides these direct critics, apologists could also adopt the strategy of omitting certain elements of the Orphic corpus, due to lack of knowledge or interest or on the other hand in order to avoid dangerous parallelisms and juxtapositions. Parallels between Christ and Orpheus were, although rarely, mentioned: violent death, the descent into the Underworld, their nature as links between the human and divine sphere. Origen, for example, reports how people actually believed in the myth of the death and resurrection of Orpheus (mentioned along with Pythagoras, Protesilaus, Hercules).²⁰³ Censorship took place especially in the narration of episodes of theophagy,²⁰⁴ and parallels between Orpheus and Christ were carefully omitted by the majority of the early apologists in order to avoid confusion, overlaps and -ultimately- syncretism between the two figures. Indeed, such a juxtaposition would have been dangerous particularly in the early stages of Christian apologetics, when the boundary between paganism and Christianity had to be firmly set.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Herrero 2010a: 240

²⁰⁰ Josephus reports an ‘unutterable law of the Jews’, namely the practice of kidnapping a Greek foreigner, immolating him and swearing an oath of hostility towards the Greeks: Joseph. *Ap.* 2.91-96.

²⁰¹ Tertullian describes how Christians are said to be the most criminal of men, killing babies for sacramental purposes and eating them during banquets followed by the practice of incest: Tert. *Apol.* 7.1-13.

²⁰² Clem. *Protr.* 2.19.

²⁰³ Orig. *CC.* 2.55. See also Orig. *CC.* 7.53.

²⁰⁴ Orig. *CC.* 4.17 and Justin. *Dial.* 69. See also Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 5.19; Clem. *Protr.* 2.17-18.

²⁰⁵ See Herrero 2010a: 247.

All in all, are we able to speak of assimilation of Orphic henotheistic elements in early Christian authors, and how? Even though we should not avoid taking into consideration the adoption of certain elements, it does not seem possible to me to speak in terms of a proper assimilation. Scholarship has debated²⁰⁶ if this might have taken place at a ‘popular’, iconographic (think about the combined figures of Orpheus, Dionysus and Christ in material culture evidence) or poetic and literary level.²⁰⁷ In any case, using the term ‘assimilation’ is often too simplistic and difficult to clarify, isolate and contextualise from a historical point of view. Hererro de Jáuregui is therefore careful and I will here follow his point when he observes that “other paradigms like coexistence, continuity, change, rupture, abandonment, are preferable, in these cases, to concepts like assimilation, conflict or triumph, since they link the object under analysis ‘vertically’ with the previous and later tradition, rather than ‘horizontally’ with a fixed religious affiliation”.²⁰⁸ After having outlined the main apologetic strategies that lie behind the quotations of Orphic texts by Christian authors, it is now time to take into consideration the various case studies of authors citing Orphic henotheistic texts and fragments in their works.

2.2 *De Monarchia* and *Cohortatio Ad Graecos*

Two important works have been long wrongly attributed to Justin Martyr, the 2nd century apologist born in Samaria but of Greek origins: the *De Monarchia*, whose original version was probably written down in a pre-Christian, Jewish-Hellenistic milieu, and the *Cohortatio ad*

²⁰⁶ See Herrero 2011.

²⁰⁷ Herrero 2011: 388. I will here mention, as an example, the so called ‘Berlin seal’, a 3rd century CE gem in which we see a crucified figure together with the inscription “Ὀρφέος Βακκικός”. It is also possible to find many paintings in catacombs and sarcophagi on which a singer/lyre player (Christ) is portrayed as Orpheus. See Vieillefon 2003; Herrero 2010a: 116 and 2011: 383.

²⁰⁸ Herrero 2011: 391.

Graecos, generally ascribed to the Greek bishop Marcellus of Ancyra and dated around the 4th century CE.

The *De Monarchia*²⁰⁹ is likely to be traced back to a collection of pagan *testimonia* composed in a Hellenistic Jewish milieu with the aim of demonstrating how the concept of divine unity can be found -at least at the beginning- also in Greek contexts. Pouderon observes, in fact, that “Il est en effet tout à fait possible que l’auteur de la compilation ait été un juif hellénisé, qui aurait fabriqué son propre recueil à partir de collections de *testimonia* existantes; l’anthologie aurait circulé jusqu’à ce qu’un polémiste chrétien s’en empare et lui donne une nouvelle identité en l’encadrant d’une introduction et d’une conclusion”.²¹⁰ According to the general idea of the treatise the original unity of the divine known also to the ancient Greeks was later forgotten by pagans due to euhemeristic tendencies which persuaded them to bestow upon God mortal attributes.²¹¹ We are therefore able to read numerous quotations from pagan authors on themes like the principle of divine unity and justice, God’s features and the ‘scandalous’ belief in false gods. The author ultimately exhorts his readers to turn to the one God throughout the whole book.

The treatise was probably re-written and provided with introduction and conclusion around the 2nd-3rd centuries (according to Pouderon’s analysis)²¹² or between the 3rd and 4th: this latter option would place it closer to the cultural milieu of the *Cohortatio*.²¹³ After an introductory chapter in which the author collects selected sources from ancient pagan poets in order to publicly denounce pagan idolatry as opposed to the belief in one God, the apologist later focuses on quotations on divine uniqueness taken from that very pagan milieu

²⁰⁹ On the *De Monarchia* see Marcovich 1990 and Pouderon 2009, containing introduction, critical edition and commentaries to the text.

²¹⁰ Pouderon 2009: 108-109.

²¹¹ *De mon.* 1.1.

²¹² See Marcovich 1990: 81-83 and Pouderon 2009: 105-109.

²¹³ See Arcari 2011: 315.

which was before denigrated. The author selects poets and wise men belonging to the most ancient Greek wisdom tradition: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Philemon, Orpheus and Pythagoras.²¹⁴

Here we find, indeed, the quotation from the *Hieros Logos*:

μαρτυρήσει δέ μοι καὶ Ὀρφεύς, ὁ παρεισάγων τοὺς τριακοσίους ἑξήκοντα πεντε θεούς, ἐν τῷ Διαθήκαις ἐπιγραφομένῳ βιβλίῳ, ὅποτε μετανοῶν ἐπὶ τούτῳ φαίνεται ἐξ ὧν γράφει [...]. Καὶ ταῦτα οὕτως φράζει, ὡς αὐτόπτης γεγονὼς τοῦ μεγέθους θεοῦ.²¹⁵

And also Orpheus will bear witness for me – he who introduces the 365 gods – in the book called Διαθήκαι, when he appears to change his mind from what he writes: [...]. So he thus illustrates such things, as if he had been a witness of God's greatness.²¹⁶

The idea of being able to spot a spark of divine unity and uniqueness in ancient Greek poetic texts has been interestingly defined as a sort of 'monotheistic memory'²¹⁷ by Italian scholar Luca Arcari and can be also found in the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, as I will illustrate shortly. It is therefore now worth considering this other pseudo-Justin work in order to better understand this apologetic strategy.

The *Cohortatio*²¹⁸ is a paraenetic and hortatory apologetic work probably composed by Bishop Marcellus of Ancyra around 3rd-4th century CE with the aim of proving how it was possible to trace monotheistic tendencies back to Greek sources.²¹⁹ After having refuted the main sources of polytheistic pagan thought (among others Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle),²²⁰ Marcellus goes on to describe the ancient Mosaic wisdom and that of the prophets, asserting their superiority (and antiquity) in terms of knowledge of divine nature.²²¹ After a brief excursus on the Septuagint²²² to further confirm the importance of the

²¹⁴ *De mon.* 2.1-5.

²¹⁵ *De mon.* 2.4-5.

²¹⁶ My translation.

²¹⁷ Arcari 2011.

²¹⁸ For the aim of this analysis I made reference to the editions of Marcovich 1990 and Pouderon 2009.

²¹⁹ See Marcovich 1990: 3-5; Arcari 2011: 298, 314.

²²⁰ *Coh. Gr.* 1-7.

²²¹ *Coh. Gr.* 8-12.

²²² *Coh. Gr.* 13.

Bible in a Greek context, the author illustrates by means of many examples the famous so-called theory of the ‘theft’ (*furtum*) of the Greeks.²²³ According to this widely spread theory, some of the notions and concepts conveyed by the Greeks and bearing a sort of ‘spark’ of religious truth would be, indeed, the result of a ‘theft’ from the Mosaic tradition. Such a contact between the two traditions (supposedly happening in Egypt) would be witnessed by the texts ascribed to the Sibyl (known thanks to the *Sibylline Oracles*),²²⁴ Pythagoras,²²⁵ Plato²²⁶ and Orpheus, who thus become (according to Marcellus) prophets of a sort of ‘proto-monotheism’.

As I have mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, my main argument is that the selection carried out by the author of the *Cohortatio* (and by the other authors which I deal with in this chapter) mainly focuses on Orphic texts that I define as ‘henotheistic’. Indeed, Marcellus quotes three texts that present a conception of the divinity close to what I have defined as henotheism: he is able to identify in those texts a special attention given to one main divinity, and therefore selects them in order to show how even part of the Orphic tradition professed the belief in an (imperfect) kind of divine unity. The Orphic henotheistic phenomenon is thus filtered by the Christian authors through specific apologetic strategies, and it is therefore interesting to now analyse these texts as precisely filtered through the Christian lens.

The first text that Marcellus quotes is the *Testament of Orpheus*. Here the legendary singer Orpheus noticeably professes conversion to the one God of the Hebrew Bible:

Ὁρφεὺς γοῦν, ὁ τῆς πολυθεότητος ὑμῶν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, πρῶτος διδάσκαλος γεγονῶς, οἷα πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Μουσαῖον καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς γνησίους ἀκροατὰς ὕστερον περὶ ἑνὸς καὶ μόνου θεοῦ κηρύττει λέγων, ἀναγκαῖον ὑπομνῆσαι ὑμᾶς. Ἐφη δὲ οὕτως [...].²²⁷

²²³ *Coh. Gr.* 14.

²²⁴ *Coh. Gr.* 16.1-2.

²²⁵ *Coh. Gr.* 19.1-2.

²²⁶ *Coh. Gr.* 20-27 and 29-33.

²²⁷ *Coh. Gr.* 15.1.

It is therefore necessary to remind you what Orpheus, who first taught you about polytheism (as one might say), later announces about the one and only God to his son Musaeus and the other disciples. In fact, he says: [...].²²⁸

As we shall see the Orphic text contains many elements derived from the Orphic literary tradition such as the *Hymn to Zeus*, and presents many features of Orphic henotheistic tendencies. The god is, indeed, presented as “εἷς ἔστ’, αὐτογενής, ἐνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται / ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιníσσεται, οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν / εἰσοράαι θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δέ γε πάντας ὁρᾶται”,²²⁹ “One, perfect in Himself and self-generated, all else by Him made perfect: ever present in His works, no one of the mortals can see him but He can see everything”.²³⁰ The Christian apologist therefore selects this text given its focus on one main divine entity, and adopts a sort of ‘appropriation’ strategy towards the Orphic tradition through the mention of the Orphic poem. The final aim would have been, indeed, that of ‘absorbing’ this stream of the Orphic tradition in order to address more effectively the pagan audience.

The second quotation is that of an Orphic fragment again focused on the theme of divine unity and characterised by a sort of pantheistic influence, which we will analyse in the next chapter. Once more, I would define this text as one which presents henotheistic features:

καὶ αὖθις ἀλλαχοῦ που οὕτως λέγει·
Εἷς Ζεὺς, εἷς Ἄϊδης, εἷς Ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος,
Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι· τί σοι δίχα ταῦτ' ἀγορεύω;²³¹

And then again somewhere else he says:

One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus.

One god in all things: why do I say these things to you in two ways?²³²

²²⁸ My translation.

²²⁹ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 8-10.

²³⁰ My translation.

²³¹ Fr. 543 F (239 K.) in *Coh. Gr.* 15.1.

²³² My translation.

The two-verse fragment belongs to a group of selected Orphic fragments generally attributed to a lost Dionysian Orphic poem,²³³ and appears to show a sort of ‘double’ nature. On the one hand it presents features of intuitive beliefs, such as terms and attributes typical of the hymnodic genre as well as an evident syncretistic tendency. However, this fragment also presents features related to more reflective contexts: it has been passed down to us by highly reflective philosophical tradition (possibly Neoplatonism through Cornelius Labeo) and presents characteristics that cannot but be ascribed to a speculative re-elaboration due to a literary, religious and theological awareness. Furthermore, fr. 543 F also contains a statement close to a pantheistic view of the divinity (Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι). The text thus constitutes another interesting case of fusion between the two perspectives, that is a possible intuitive ritualistic background incorporated and manipulated by a later and more aware reflection on the status of the divinity. This divine entity is presented as characterised by features of unity and it appears to be what Marcellus is interested in when selecting the texts to quote.

The last Orphic fragment that we find in the *Cohortatio* is taken from the Orphic *Oaths*. Marcellus focuses on the idea of Divine Word and states that also Orpheus had the chance to affirm this concept thanks to his trip to Egypt during which he would have come into contact with Jewish and Mosaic wisdom. The Orphic fragment speaks, indeed, of ‘the voice of the father’ (full text in the Appendix, item 6).²³⁴ The Orphic *Oaths* quoted here may have been a collection of *formulae* used by the initiates to swear secrecy and not to reveal the contents of the mysteries they were about to be shown. Some of these *formulae* might have been indeed collected adding some literary features thus creating a sort of aura of sacredness. The fragment presents features of henotheistic tendencies: the role attributed to Οὐρανός,²³⁵ the *formula* ‘θεοῦ μεγάλου’, the term ‘πατήρ’ and the role played by the *cosmos* created by Zeus.

²³³ For a thorough analysis of this fragment please see §3.3.

²³⁴ Fr. 620 F (299 K.) in *Coh. Gr.* 15.2.

²³⁵ Which presents similarities with the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* and fr. 619 F (300 K.). See also PGM IV, 1708 and V, 98. For the text of the Greek Magical Papyri see Betz 1986.

The author of the *Cohortatio* therefore uses this fragment to portray Orpheus as a sort of teacher of monotheism in polytheistic contexts,²³⁶ changing his mind thanks to the influence of Moses and preaching about the one God.

The apologetic work ends with the exhortation to the conversion to the one God²³⁷ and a last word of appreciation for the Sibyl, imperfect prophetess of monotheism among the Gentiles.²³⁸ The final aim would have been, indeed, that of ‘absorbing’ this stream of the prestigious Orphic tradition in order to defend the new faith, convert the pagan audience of the time and remind Christian readers of the ‘constant’ need for conversion. Indeed, it is precisely Marcellus who explicitly states that this is his aim (full passage in the Appendix, item 7).²³⁹

All in all, as I have anticipated, the two treatises show a similar attitude towards our Orphic sources sharing a common atmosphere of ‘monotheistic memory’, where divine unity is traced back to a distant (and to some extent manipulated) past. Thanks to this apologetic strategy the Christian authors selected specific henotheistic sources – mostly reflective even if with intuitive features – in order both to incorporate the prestigious ancient Greek wisdom into their own tradition and at the same time show the superiority of the new faith.²⁴⁰

2.3 Clement of Alexandria

Born around 140-150 CE to a pagan family living in Alexandria (or, as some others believe, Athens), Clement converted to Christianity and worked in Alexandria until he was forced to leave following Septimius Severus’ policy. After having become one of the most important

²³⁶ *Coh. Gr.* 15.2.

²³⁷ *Coh. Gr.* 35.

²³⁸ *Coh. Gr.* 38.1-2.

²³⁹ *Coh. Gr.* 36.4.

²⁴⁰ See Arcari 2011: 283-284.

representatives of Alexandrian theology, followed a few years later by Origen, he died around 215-220 CE.²⁴¹ Among his ample literary and theological production, I would like to first draw attention to one of his works which I believe to be fundamental for the aim of the present analysis: the *Protrepticus*.

The *Protrepticus* was composed around 190 CE with the aim of exhorting the Greeks (and all the pagans in general) to turn to the one God. The author does not condemn Hellenic culture and traditions as a whole, but rather tries to convert his audience by criticizing idolatry²⁴² and at the same time by attempting to bestow value on those elements coming from the Greek heritage that he considered to be a fruitful common ground to attract pagans towards Christianity. Even though it is not possible to identify a linear structure of the treatise, we are able to ideally divide the work into two main blocks which also correspond to the two attitudes I have just outlined: criticism and on the contrary appreciation of certain Greek aspects.

In the first part (chapters 1-5) the apologist focuses on glorifying the new religion, harshly criticising traditional pagan expressions of devotion, while in the second section (chapters 6-7) he is able to recognise the presence of the Christian *Logos* also in the Greek context, even though -of course- the ultimate revelation will take place only with the divine incarnation in Christ. It is now time to extrapolate a few passages from the treatise which concern Orphic texts and bear witness of such a complex approach towards pagan sources.

In the first chapter Clement praises the superiority and rationality of the ‘new song’ of the *Logos* exhorting pagans to abandon their old, false myths. It is here that we find the first passage mentioning Orpheus, whose text can be found in the Appendix, item 8.²⁴³ Orpheus is here presented as an artful deceiver, as opposed to the new minstrel: Christ. It is therefore

²⁴¹ On Clement’s life and works it is worth mentioning Lilla 1971: 1-8, Ferguson 1991: 3-19 and Osborn 2005: 1-27.

²⁴² See for example Clem. *Protr.* 1.1; 2.11; 2.14; 2.25-27.

²⁴³ Clem. *Protr.* 1.4.

worth noticing how Orpheus, one of the most important figures of the pagan tradition, is here used in order to link some of his features to the singer of the new religion. Images that were already part of the traditional iconography associated with Orpheus – such as the thaumaturgical effects of his songs – are now manipulated to draw the pagan audience closer to Christianity: in the following passage, in fact, Clement pictures Jesus who, just as Orpheus moves animals with his singing, tames even more difficult creatures – the hearts of evil men. The important thing to notice, however, is that this set of scenes and images is quoted without its original context: Orpheus the Thracian thus becomes a ‘deceiver’ possessed by daemons, commemorating false gods and violent deeds. We therefore see here an attitude which is very close to the one I had defined as ‘criticism’ and refusal. In the first section of this chapter Clement mentions Orpheus in order to criticise his figure and reject the traditional songs associated with him.

The attack against pagans continues in the following pages: in the second chapter Clement vituperates the mysteries of Dionysos and Demeter,²⁴⁴ the myths regarding Poseidon, Apollo and Zeus,²⁴⁵ and many divine epithets.²⁴⁶ In chapters 3 and 4 he harshly attacks practices like human sacrifices and the importance attributed to the cult of statues.²⁴⁷ While the 5th chapter continues along these lines, criticising pagan philosophers for formulating false and contradictory statements about the gods,²⁴⁸ the 6th chapter represents a break from the previous sections: here, in fact, Clement admits that some Greek philosophers might have come into contact with a spark of divine truth about the one God.²⁴⁹ Plato, Xenophon and Cleanthes²⁵⁰ are some of the most important Greek thinkers who –

²⁴⁴ Clem. *Protr.* 2.12-20.

²⁴⁵ Clem. *Protr.* 2.30-32.

²⁴⁶ Clem. *Protr.* 3.38-39.

²⁴⁷ Clem. *Protr.* 4.46-47; 4.52.

²⁴⁸ Contradictions that may lead to atheism: Clem. *Protr.* 5.64-66.

²⁴⁹ Clem. *Protr.* 6.68.

²⁵⁰ Clem. *Protr.* 6.70-72.

according to Clement- would have come to have a partial glimpse of the Christian truth. The attitude of the apologist towards paganism and Orphism is therefore here twofold: on the one hand, in fact, he harshly condemns pagan rites and practices, but on the other he attributes an important role to part of the Greek philosophical tradition – that of preparing the Gentiles to receive the Christian message, which represents the true philosophy and true religion.

The 7th chapter is entirely dedicated to Greek poets and their relationship with the divine. The embracing attitude which I have just mentioned is here evident: some Greek authors are in fact quoted as examples of pagan witnesses (however imperfect) of the truth about the one God; among these are Aratus, Hesiod, Euripides and Sophocles.²⁵¹ It is here that we find the quotation from the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos* (full text in the Appendix, item 9).²⁵² Clement quotes the first 8 verses of pseudo-Justin's version of the *Hieros Logos* and lines 8-10 focused on the description of God's features.²⁵³ This is clearly in line with his argumentation, according to which – as we shall see– some of the greatest representatives of pagan poetry and philosophy were able to partially grasp the divine truth. Orpheus thus becomes the protagonist of a sort of 'recantation', 'palinode', and his reputation is somehow restored after the harsh attacks of the first chapter.

The same lines 8-10 will be quoted again by Clement in the *Stromateis* (5.12.78) but with a very important variation. While in the *Protrepticus* we read the term αὐτογενής – 'self-generated', in the *Stromateis* we find the variant αὐτοτελής – 'self-sufficient, perfect in himself'. I argue that such a substitution may be due to the fact that the author later decided

²⁵¹ Clem. *Protr.* 7.73-74.

²⁵² Clem. *Protr.* 7.74.

²⁵³ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 1-10. Clement also quotes *Orac. Syb.* 3.624-625 (Geffcken 1902: 80). Herrero (2010: 182 n.93) comments that "One might think that Clement mistakenly attributes those two lines to Orpheus (Bernabé edits them as OF 844). But Clement knows the *Sibylline Oracles* well, as his many quotations show. Besides, it is not strange that he quotes allusively without mentioning the author [...]. The oracle simply underlines the process of conversion undergone by Orpheus".

to avoid a term which could have dangerously sounded as having immanentistic elements. As I have previously stated, Clement's main source for the *Hieros Logos* is pseudo-Justin. To be more precise, however, Herrero has observed how the source of this and other quotations from the *Urfassung*²⁵⁴ version of the text would be on the one hand the *De monarchia* and on the other a corpus of apologetic anthologies circulating at the time in which Clement lived.²⁵⁵ Zeegers had also previously analysed the theme of the quotations of Greek poets in 2nd century Christian apologetic works, including those in collective anthologies. The scholar, in fact, describes the possible structure of a lost, common source (defined as 'anthologie du plagiat') lying behind pseudo-Justin and Clement.²⁵⁶

The 7th chapter of the *Protrepticus* ends with the quotation of some poets who have highlighted the absurdity of their very own, false gods.²⁵⁷ Lastly, the final sections of the treatise represent an exhortation to convert to the One God: the author quotes the prophets²⁵⁸ and clarifies the meaning of the divine Word and the role of God as father,²⁵⁹ exalting the regenerative effects of divine Grace.²⁶⁰ The apologetic work ends with an invitation to embrace the new *Logos* and the author noticeably uses terms related to semantic area of the mysteries – the same mysteries which were the object of his accusations in the first part of the treatise.²⁶¹

The other work by Clement which is relevant for the aim of this research is the *Stromateis*,²⁶² literally translated as 'patchwork quilt', or 'miscellanies'.²⁶³ As the title itself

²⁵⁴ Riedweg 1993: 25, 44.

²⁵⁵ Herrero 2010a: 182 and 185-186.

²⁵⁶ Zeegers 1972: 187-189.

²⁵⁷ Clem. *Protr.* 7.75-76.

²⁵⁸ Clem. *Protr.* 8.

²⁵⁹ Clem. *Protr.* 9-10.

²⁶⁰ Clem. *Protr.* 11.

²⁶¹ Clem. *Protr.* 12.

²⁶² For an introduction to the *Stromateis* see Ferguson 1991: 3-19.

²⁶³ See Ferguson 1991: 10-11.

suggests, the treatise is a collection of quotations and passages aimed at building a coherent argument about ‘true knowledge’, which according to the author coincides with true philosophy. As opposed to the Gnostics,²⁶⁴ in fact, Clement believes that everyone can reach the Christian ‘true *gnosis*’ thanks to his/her faith, which also provides us with the virtues that are necessary to achieve it. The itinerary of the ‘true gnostic’ as described by Clement appears as the encapsulation of an intellectual and spiritual path, in which the Greek idea of the wise man is integrated with the Christian model of holy man. The work aims, indeed, to “comprendere in unità le esperienze greca, ebraica e cristiana, e concepire la teologia e l’etica cristiane come il sistema della vera filosofia, nel quale culmina tutta la storia della rivelazione divina attuata dal Logos”.²⁶⁵ The aim of the treatise is twofold: on the one hand it aspires to further educate about the ‘true *gnosis*’ those who are already converted to Christianity, and on the other it seeks to explain this true philosophy to both the external (pagans and Jews) and internal opponents (such as the Gnostics).²⁶⁶

Although it is not easy to summarise such a complex work, we may identify 7 main books, beginning with an exposition of the author’s aims²⁶⁷ and a sort of ‘apology’ of philosophy: even Greek philosophers, in fact, have had a glimpse of true knowledge, thus representing a sort of preparatory stage towards the Christian faith.²⁶⁸ The first book dwells a little bit more on this topic and then proceeds with the formulation of the theory of the unity and universality of truth: even the Greek philosophers, indeed, got to know the true *Logos*, although in an imperfect way.²⁶⁹ It is here that we find, for the first time, a short mention of our legendary singer Orpheus quoted among those ‘barbarian’ wise men worth of being

²⁶⁴ See Procter 1995 and Moreschini 2004: 113-115.

²⁶⁵ Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 126.

²⁶⁶ See Procter 1995; Osborn 2005: 213-225.

²⁶⁷ Clem. *Strom.* 1.1.11-16.

²⁶⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 1.5.28. For a description of the structure of this treatise please see Ferguson 1991: 13-15.

²⁶⁹ Clem. *Strom.* 1.13.57.

taking into consideration as they were able to partially reveal the truth about the One God (items 10 and 11 in the Appendix).²⁷⁰

The book continues with an overview of the discoveries of the ‘barbarians’ but terminates with a declaration of the superiority and anteriority of Moses,²⁷¹ preceded by the exposition of a detailed chronology.²⁷² The second and third books are focused on the concepts of faith and *gnosis*,²⁷³ along with the models of the Christian martyr²⁷⁴ and true gnostic, while the third mainly touches upon the ethical and moral sphere, going deeper into the theme of marriage and abstinence.²⁷⁵

The fifth book of the *Stromateis* rotates around faith and *gnosis*, as well as the use of symbolic language to discuss the divine. Indeed, not only prophets but also great philosophers made use of such a language to disclose the truth around God, revealed through enigmas and therefore susceptible to interpretation.²⁷⁶ Orpheus himself, thanks to the teachings of the Jewish prophets, uses symbols to reveal his truths, hidden under his poetic words (item 12).²⁷⁷ As we have already seen, these poets have learned the truth about the divine from the prophets: Clement goes on to explain how even the greatest Greek thinkers have come to know the One God, mostly thanks to the influence of Moses,²⁷⁸ and he therefore lists the pagan writers who have talked about God.²⁷⁹ It is notable that Clement offers here an esoteric reading of these poets, suggesting that they offer secret wisdom to the wise, and

²⁷⁰ Clem. *Strom.* 1.14.59 and 1.15.66.

²⁷¹ Clem. *Strom.* 1.23-29.

²⁷² Clem. *Strom.* 1.21.101-147.

²⁷³ Clem. *Strom.* 2.1.1-2.

²⁷⁴ Clem. *Strom.* 2.4.12.

²⁷⁵ Clem. *Strom.* 3.1.1.

²⁷⁶ Clem. *Strom.* 5.4.19-20.

²⁷⁷ Clem. *Strom.* 5.4.24.

²⁷⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 5.11.67.

²⁷⁹ Clem. *Strom.* 5.11-14.

goes on to say the same about the account of Moses in *Exodus*: he therefore seems to be reading ‘pagan’ and biblical texts in a similar way.

It is here that we find the quotations that are most important for the aim of my analysis: Clement quotes verses from the *Hieros Logos* and other Orphic (henotheistic) fragments as examples of a description of the One God made by a pagan poet inspired by Mosaic wisdom. Before analysing these quotations, however, I would like to specify that for each citation I will mention the source for the passage: such quotations are, in fact, quite complex precisely because of the different sources (Aristobulus, apologetic anthologies, the *De Monarchia*...) which were used and – to some extent – manipulated by Clement.²⁸⁰

The first passage I would like to focus on is in chapter 12, where Orpheus talks about God gleaning ideas and images from Moses’ words (full text can be found in the Appendix item 13).²⁸¹ The source for the quotation of these verses is represented by the pseudo-Justin version of the *Hieros Logos*, known through the *De monarchia* and the apologetic anthologies, as we have seen in the analysis of the passages from the *Protrepticus*. I would just like to stress here that at line 10 the term αὐτοτελής ‘self-sufficient, perfect’ substitutes αὐτογενής ‘self-generating’, probably in order to avoid dangerous immanentistic connotations.

Book 5 continues with various quotations from biblical passages and pagan authors in order to further confirm the thesis of the *furtum* of the Greeks with regard to the truth about the One God;²⁸² we interestingly find here mentioned again the legendary figure of Orpheus, and more specifically a quotation from the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*.²⁸³

After having quoted lines from (among others) Plato, the Stoics and the Pythagoreans, Clement cites two verses from the pseudo-Aristotelian version of the *Hymn to Zeus*. He aims to demonstrate how the lines from the hymn suggest that God – who is Zeus in the Orphic

²⁸⁰ Herrero 2010a: 185-186.

²⁸¹ Clem. *Strom.* 5.12.78.

²⁸² Clem. *Strom.* 5.13-14.

²⁸³ Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 7-8 in Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.122.

Hymn – brought the truth about the divine thus enabling mortals to participate in a happy existence during and after life (implying moral and ethical connotations). The author then proceeds quoting verses from the *Hieros Logos*, possibly coming directly from Aristobulus. On the one hand, in fact, the first lines are also found in pseudo-Justin²⁸⁴ while on the other the quotations from the *Hieros Logos* continue with some verses which can only be found in the Aristobulean version of the text:²⁸⁵

αὐθίς τε περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀόρατον αὐτὸν λέγων, μόνῳ γνωσθῆναι ἐνί τινί φησι τὸ γένος
Χαλδαίῳ, εἴτε τὸν Ἀβραάμ λέγων τοῦτον εἴτε καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ, διὰ τούτων [...]
εἶτα οἶον <παραφράζων> τὸ ‘ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου’
ἐπιφέρει [...].²⁸⁶

And again, about God, saying that He was invisible, and that He was known to but one, a Chaldean by race – meaning either by this Abraham or his son – he speaks as follows:—
[...] Then, as if paraphrasing the expression ‘Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool’ he adds: [...].²⁸⁷

The quotation is due to the fact that only in the Aristobulean version do we find Abraham and some images (such as the trembling of the mountains) which appear also in several biblical passages mentioned by Clement right after this text.²⁸⁸ It is therefore important to notice how Clement selects the sources of a henotheistic text – the *Hieros Logos* – based on the content of the different versions of the poem, depending on his different arguments and aims.

The following quotations of Orphic henotheistic texts on the theme of divine unity and uniqueness come from the so called ‘Orphic Testaments’ and from the *De monarchia* version of the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos* (filtered by the aforementioned apologetic anthologies).

²⁸⁴ Frr. 377 F (245 K.), 5-7a; 378 F (247 K.), 6-9 in Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.122-123.

²⁸⁵ Namely fr. 378 F (247 K.), 23-27 and 29-39. See Radice 1995: 226-227.

²⁸⁶ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.123-124.

²⁸⁷ My translation.

²⁸⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.124-125, that is Isa: 66, 1; 64, 1-2.

Clement continues to refer to the Orphic literary corpus when quoting a sort of ‘Orphic Hymn to Zeus’ which I will analyse in the 3rd chapter of this dissertation, that is fr. 691 F (248 K.).²⁸⁹ Kern classifies this source as belonging to a corpus of texts known as ‘Διαθηκαί’ (Orphic Testaments), used by Christian authors to prove that the legendary singer Orpheus had converted to monotheism later in his life (a sort of παλινωδία, like the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos*).²⁹⁰ Indeed, I consider this fragment to be the product of a syncretistic conception of the divinity, in which Jewish influences and features are inserted into a pagan background. Furthermore, I believe this pagan background to be henotheistic, since the god that is represented in this source appears to be described as one supreme god, ruling over the universe and other gods.

The 5th book continues explaining how Orpheus referred to Isaiah and Moses when speaking of the one god in his παλινωδία (item 14 in the Appendix).²⁹¹ The theory of the *furtum* of the Greeks is therefore confirmed also in the case of Orpheus and is corroborated by numerous other examples which follow this last passage:²⁹² thanks to the knowledge of ancient Jewish wisdom, in fact, the Greeks also came to know the One God even if in a confused and incomplete way.²⁹³ I would like to stress here, however, that such a *furtum* is not considered by Clement to be a kind of ‘plagiarism’ or in general something to condemn, but rather as a further proof of the moral superiority of monotheism over paganism. This is indeed confirmed by some of the best-known figures of the ancient Greek tradition such as Orpheus, and the credibility of Greek culture itself is therefore somehow restored after the attacks we saw taking place in the *Protrepticus*. One last, short quotation from the *Hieros Logos* closes the references to the legendary singer Orpheus:

²⁸⁹ Fr. 691 F (248 K.) in Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.125-126.

²⁹⁰ Kern 1922: 255.

²⁹¹ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.126-127.

²⁹² Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.127-141.

²⁹³ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.133-134.

οὐδέ τις ἕσθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγάλου βασιλῆος,
Ὀρφεὺς λέγει.²⁹⁴

For there is none but the great King,
Says Orpheus.²⁹⁵

The 6th book of the *Stromateis* starts with another in-depth description of the theory of the *furtum* of the Greeks,²⁹⁶ and continues with an illustration of the life of the true gnostic.²⁹⁷ Greek philosophy is, according to the author, fruitful only when inserted in the wider picture of the reading of the Sacred Book. The treatise ends with a moral and religious description of the true gnostic, the only one able to see and worship God in a perfect way.²⁹⁸ The *Stromateis* therefore represent a constant comparison between the ‘pagan’ past and the Christian present, a dialogue between the ‘true philosophy’ of the new religion and Greek philosophy (the *sophia* of the Orphics, in our case), which prepares the Gentiles for the reception of the Christian message.²⁹⁹

2.4 Eusebius of Caesarea

Although he was one of the most important intellectual figures of his time, as well as one of the protagonists of an extremely lively theological debate, we know little about Eusebius’ life.³⁰⁰ Likely born in Caesarea (Palestine) around the mid 3rd century CE, he was a student of the presbyter and martyr Pamphilus in whose school he had the chance to deepen his knowledge of literature, philology and theology. He travelled a lot especially after being

²⁹⁴ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 13 in Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.133.

²⁹⁵ My translation.

²⁹⁶ Clem. *Strom.* 6.1-4.

²⁹⁷ Clem. *Strom.* 6.9-14.

²⁹⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 7.1.1.

²⁹⁹ See Lilla 1971: 53-59.

³⁰⁰ See Sirinelli-Des Places 1974: 8-54; Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 201-207; Moreschini 2004: 319-328. On his biography see among others Sirinelli-Des Places 1974: 16-23; Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 201-202.

appointed presbyter around 300 CE and visited the libraries of Caesarea and Jerusalem where he further studied religious writings. After having escaped death during the turmoil of 303-311 (contrary to his teacher Pamphilus who perished that year) he was appointed bishop of Caesarea around 313-315. Being one of the most prominent figures of the intellectual milieu of his time, he supported Arius during the debate on the Arian controversy but was later forced to distance himself from that position after his participation in the council of Nicaea in 325.³⁰¹ He died shortly after the death of Constantine. His extensive production is composed of very heterogeneous works and genres: historical, theological, exegetical and apologetic - the result of an ample and varied knowledge.³⁰² To the apologetic genre³⁰³ belongs the work that will be at the centre of my analysis, that is the *Praeparatio Evangelica*.

Probably written between 312 and 320 CE,³⁰⁴ the *Praeparatio* is perfectly set in the new cultural milieu following the end of the religious turmoil. While, in fact, paganism had previously tried to oppose the very existence of Christianity and its literary forms, the new generation of gentile intellectuals (Porphyry among others)³⁰⁵ was attempting to threaten the credibility of the new religion as well as its claims of antiquity and intellectual supremacy.³⁰⁶ Indeed, while apologists in the past focused mainly on defending the new faith against a still lively and powerful pagan community, Eusebius now perceived that he had to defend it against different kinds of charges:³⁰⁷ his aim was to demonstrate -through the words of the pagan authors- that Judaism was more ancient and superior to Greek philosophy and that the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible found true realisation in Christ. Thanks to his

³⁰¹ On Eusebius' theology see Moreschini 2004: 325-328.

³⁰² On Eusebius' ample production see Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 202-207.

³⁰³ On his apologetics see Moreschini 2004: 319-324.

³⁰⁴ On the historical context of the work see Sirinelli-Des Places 1974: 24-34.

³⁰⁵ On the relationship between Porphyry and Eusebius see Sirinelli-Des Places 1974: 28-34 and Moreschini 2004: 319-322.

³⁰⁶ Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 202.

³⁰⁷ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.3.

extensive knowledge of history and philology, he calls not only on the newly converted Christian intellectuals but also on those pagans who accused the new religion of being irrational. His attitude towards Hellenic culture is, indeed, generally positive although critical when it comes to giving an opinion on ancient cults.³⁰⁸ The *Praeparatio* therefore represents a valuable testimony of the Christian reception of classical cultural and literary heritage: Eusebius aims at defending the dignity and ‘rationality’ of Christianity while also embracing the Greek legacy and not only attacking it. Thanks to him we are therefore able to read works of Greek authors and thinkers which would have otherwise been lost.

The structure of the treatise, usually divided into 15 books and extremely complex in terms of its internal sub-divisions, appears to be relatively linear. In the first 6 books we find a description of the traditional theology of the Greeks, developed thanks to the contribution (according to Eusebius) of foreign religious traditions such as that of the Egyptians.³⁰⁹ Such a theology, together with the relevant cults, would lead to being most of the time immoral and irrational³¹⁰ and therefore worthy of being refused by any Christian.³¹¹ From the 7th to the 10th book, then, the author proceeds with presenting the theology and customs of the Jews³¹² focusing his attention on the prestigious figure of Moses.³¹³ In the last 4 books the treatise dwells on the analysis of Greek philosophy and Plato in particular, stressing how the philosopher was also in agreement with the Holy Book following some of its most important aspects.³¹⁴ Even if, in fact, Platonic thought can be considered worthy to be mentioned and studied, it cannot always be embraced and accepted: the Jewish tradition must always be the

³⁰⁸ Moreschini 2004: 321.

³⁰⁹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.1; 3.1-3

³¹⁰ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 4.14-19.

³¹¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.5-6.

³¹² Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 7.1-11.

³¹³ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.1 and 8.7.

³¹⁴ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 11.1.

focal benchmark.³¹⁵ Eusebius decides to end the work with a display of the remaining ‘natural theories’ of Greek philosophers, stressing how often those very philosophers found themselves in error and conflict one against the other.³¹⁶

It is now time to briefly go through the passages in which Eusebius mentions Orpheus trying to contextualize such passages within the broader treatise. The first passage in which we see Orpheus appearing is in the 1st book when the author presents the aims of the *Praeparatio*: to illustrate the theologies of ancient people and polytheistic traditions. It is interesting to notice how the polytheistic ‘error’ is traced back to the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and how they have transmitted to Orpheus the knowledge of the mysteries which the legendary singer would later introduce in Greece (item 15 in the Appendix).³¹⁷

In the following chapters of book 1 which is aimed, as we have seen, at demonstrating the irrationality of polytheism, Eusebius goes on to describe an older phase of the Egyptian religion in which a sort of ‘astrological theology’ was the dominating force. According to the apologist, in fact, the ancient Egyptians – immersed in the contemplation of natural phenomena – had been the first to worship the sun and moon. Even the Greeks had then taken on such an inclination, so much so that Diodorus reports a case of parallelism between Phanes (sunlight) and Dionysus found in an Orphic fragment.³¹⁸ It is important to notice how this fragment is the same fragment we will analyse in chapter 3 and that we will find also in the *Tübingen Theosophy* (item 16).³¹⁹

The parallelism between Osiris and Dionysos, which can be considered as ‘syncretistic’,³²⁰ returns in the 2nd book of the *Praeparatio* and more precisely in its first chapter centred on the exposition of a sort of ‘compendium’ of Egyptian theology. Here the author presents the

³¹⁵ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.14.

³¹⁶ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 14.2 and 14.10.

³¹⁷ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.5.13; 1.6.1-4.

³¹⁸ Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 1.11.3 = fr. 540 F (237 K.). See later on in this analysis §3.3

³¹⁹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.8.19; 1.9.1-3.

³²⁰ Bernabé 2005a: 112-113.

narratives related to the birth and deeds of Osiris,³²¹ underlining how the Egyptian god was identified with Dionysos and how his origins were mistakenly located in Boeotia (item 17).³²² In the Eusebian narrative we therefore see the story of how Orpheus himself introduced initiatory rites into Greece from Egypt and transferred the god's birth to Thebes: Orphic mystery rites are not only linked with the Dionysian ones but are also traced back to the Egyptian context. Eusebius is, indeed, interested in stressing how Greek wisdom derives from the 'barbarian' one (and the Egyptian in particular) and how these two kinds of wisdom - together with the related cults and theologies- should be in fact considered essentially deceptive.³²³ The theme of the relationship between Orpheus and the Egyptian context and between such a context and Osiris and Dionysos will be recalled in the 10th book of the *Praeparatio* when a parallelism will be drawn on a cult level between some Egyptian and Greek funerary rites.³²⁴

Eusebius' attack is, as we said, directed against not only the mythological and theological narratives but also against cults and initiatory rites, considered to be shameless and deceptive. In order to prove this, the author quotes Clement who in the *Protrepticus* describes and criticizes these very rites.³²⁵ Within this catalogue of deceitful cults the author inserts a reference to the mysteries, found in some of our Orphic fragments.³²⁶ The legendary singer is therefore witness of such 'inhuman' mysteries, as shown in the passage below:

ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ κρύφια τῶν Ἀθηναίων μυστήρια, ταῦτά τοι καὶ Ὀρφεὺς ἀναγράφει.
 Παραθήσομαι δέ σοι αὐτὰ τοῦ Ὀρφέως τὰ ἔπη, ἵν' ἔχῃς μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναισχυντίας τὸν
 μυσταγωγόν·
 "Ὡς εἰποῦσα πέπλους ἀνεσύρατο, δείξε δὲ πάντα
 σώματος οὐδὲ πρόποντα τύπον· παῖς δ' ἦεν Ἰακχος,

³²¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.1.

³²² Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.1.23-24.

³²³ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.2-3.

³²⁴ Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 1.96.1-5 in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.8.1-5.

³²⁵ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.2.63-64.

³²⁶ Fr. 306 F (34 K.) in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.3.23.

χειρί τέ μιν ρίπτασκε γελῶν Βαυβοῦς ὑπὸ κόλποις·
 ἢ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν μείδῃσε θεά, μείδῃσ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ,
 δέξατο δ' αἰόλον ἄγγος, ἐν ᾧ κυκεὼν ἐνέκειτο.³²⁷

These are the secret mysteries of the Athenians! These are the things which Orpheus records! But I will set before you the very words of Orpheus, that you may have the master of mysteries himself as witness of their shamelessness:

She spoke, and quick her flowing robes withdrawn
 showed all the secret beauty of her form.
 The child Iacchus, laughing, stretched his hand
 to touch her tender breasts, and Baubo smiled;
 then, too, the goddess smiled with cheerful thought,
 and took the shining bowl which held the draught.³²⁸

It is worth noticing that the mention of Baubo in this fragment³²⁹ may be a reference to the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, and not a specific reference to the Mysteries. Eusebius, however, may well have connected the Hymn to the Mysteries, as modern scholars do, and this is why I have decided to include this passage in my analysis of the reception of Orphic texts in Eusebius.³³⁰

The 3rd book goes on with the exposition of the theology of the Greeks, defined by him as ‘obscure and mysterious’, covered in myths: such features would be, indeed, proved also by the Orphic poems and theogonies.³³¹ The apologist dwells upon the narration of the different mythological tales concerning different Greek and Egyptian divinities, describing the ‘natural’ origin of some of these divinities in order to demonstrate their irrationality and falsehood. An example is goddess Earth, whose name appears also in an Orphic fragment

³²⁷ Clem. *Protr.* 2.18 = Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 2.3.34.

³²⁸ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 72 edited and revised by me.

³²⁹ Fr. 395 F (52 K.).

³³⁰ For an analysis of this fragment see Scarpi 2002: 468 and 648. Scarpi, referring to the Berlin papyrus dated back to the 2nd century BCE and included by him in the collection of the Orphic fragments on foundation myths just before our fragment 395 F (52 K.), talks about an ‘Orphic paraphrase’ of the Demeter myth (Scarpi 2002: 644).

³³¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.1.1.

quoted by Diodorus and which we find in Eusebius.³³² In this book we also find some chapters that appear to be interesting for the aim of my research. Eusebius, always following the idea of attacking Greek divinities in order to prove their absurdity, inserts here an Orphic text which will be analysed in the next chapter of this thesis: the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*. What sets this quotation apart from all other citations is that here the apologist not only refutes this fragment but also mentions the interpretation of this text given by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry. Starting from this interpretation, then, Eusebius will further describe the features of the Orphic Zeus emerging from the Hymn and will build up his complex and articulated confutation (item 18).³³³

Orpheus returns in the 9th book of the *Praeparatio* when the narrative is centred on the Jewish people: their philosophy is here defended by Eusebius who wants to assert its superiority.³³⁴ He mentions various passages from Greek authors talking about the Jews: among others Theophrastus,³³⁵ Porphyry,³³⁶ Numenius.³³⁷ The focus of the narrative is then fixed on the figures of Abraham³³⁸ and Moses;³³⁹ during the narration of Moses' origins by Artapanus we see Orpheus, here represented as one of the disciples of Moses (item 19).³⁴⁰ This represents a remarkable proof of the tendency I will further observe throughout my dissertation: several authors such as, in this case, Artapanus, were willing to link Greek and Jewish history in order to describe a presumed contact between Orpheus and Moses and even to fuse Moses and Musaeus together, thus inverting the traditional order Orpheus-Musaeus in order to make Orpheus one of Moses' followers. Eusebius himself quotes Artapanus' words

³³² Fr. 399 F (302 K.) in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.3.4-5.

³³³ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.9.1-6.

³³⁴ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.1.

³³⁵ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.2.

³³⁶ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.3.

³³⁷ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.7.

³³⁸ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.16-20.

³³⁹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.26-29

³⁴⁰ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.1-4.

to highlight the antiquity and prestige of the Mosaic wisdom from which even Orpheus -the legendary Greek singer- would have assimilated some of his most important precepts.

In the 10th book Eusebius keeps underlining this antiquity and prestige,³⁴¹ but this time the judgment on Greek writers and philosophers is different. If their beliefs were previously altogether rejected as misleading and deceptive, Eusebius is now open to the possibility of finding a spark of truth in their works and thought. This would derive from their contact with the Holy Scripture and with the Jewish wisdom, from which they would have gleaned valuable teachings³⁴² and whom they would not have hesitated to ‘copy’ and imitate.³⁴³ After an initial phase in which Greek wise men were caught in Egyptian cults and mysteries, many Greek philosophers and poets then gleaned concepts from the Jewish wisdom in order to broaden their knowledge on divine truths.³⁴⁴ Right in such a context we read the quotation from the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus* which is reported by Eusebius within the quotation of a longer fragment by the Alexandrian philosopher Aristobulus. The 12th chapter of the 13th book represents indeed the most important source of his fragments 3 and 4.³⁴⁵

Eusebius quotes, first of all, a fragment in which the philosopher shows how some of the most important Greek thinkers such as Plato and Pythagoras had come into contact with and partially followed the teachings of Holy Scripture.³⁴⁶ It will not be possible to analyse here Aristobulus’ assertions about supposed Greek translations (however partial) of the Pentateuch prior to the Septuagint.³⁴⁷ What I would like to stress here is that the

³⁴¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.1.

³⁴² Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.4.

³⁴³ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.2-3.

³⁴⁴ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12-13.

³⁴⁵ Kraus Reggiani 1982: 108-119.

³⁴⁶ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.11 and 13.12.1-2.

³⁴⁷ See Kraus Reggiani 1982: 109-110 and Veltri 1992: 90. Veltri observes how the Torah was probably read by non-Jewish Greeks much later thanks to the first Greek translations, and that before those times people probably knew about the Jewish Scriptures through oral tradition (Veltri 1992: 98-99).

philosopher's main interest -and Eusebius' aim, after him- seems to be that of highlighting the fact that two of the most important Greek thinkers, Plato and Pythagoras, were inspired by the Jewish texts in terms of antiquity and prestige. Eusebius then goes on mentioning another of Aristobulus' fragments, that is number 4 (item 20 of the Appendix),³⁴⁸ choosing to quote precisely the fragment in which Aristobulus reports the Orphic *Hieros Logos* with the aim of using an authoritative source that could back up his thesis according to which some of the most important Greek thinkers (Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates) had come into contact with the concept of divine unity through Scripture. Indeed even the legendary singer Orpheus, a fundamental figure of the Greek cultural background, was inspired by ancient Jewish wisdom when he talked about the one God in the *Hieros Logos*.

I am therefore suggesting that it is possible to identify and analyse three different 'authorial' levels in the source.³⁴⁹ The first (and oldest) is represented by the original text of the *Hieros Logos* composed by an anonymous Jewish philosopher and poet. This original anonymous version is lost, and it is therefore possible to reconstruct part of its original shape only through the comparison of the different later testimonies of the text.³⁵⁰ The second level is constituted by the version of the 3rd/2nd century BCE Alexandrian philosopher Aristobulus who chose to quote our text in the so called 'fragment 4', modifying and expanding it also according to his philosophical tendencies. See, for example, the focus on features such as that of the θεῖα δύναμις and of the creative role of God as being superior to all things, all due to the influence of peripatetic philosophy and the pseudo-Aristotelian *De*

³⁴⁸ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.3-8. On the order of the fragments see Kraus Reggiani (1982: 115): "è molto plausibile [...] che il fr. 4 possa ritenersi una continuazione del fr. 2 e che quest'ultimo, anziché precedere il fr. 3 – come risulta dalla collocazione che ne dà Eusebio inserendolo in un libro precedente della *Praeparatio Evangelica* (l'VIII) – si trovasse originariamente tra il fr. 3 e il fr. 4".

³⁴⁹ Cerutti stresses the importance of Eusebius and of his apologetic strategies: "il livello della argomentazione apologetica [...] all'interno dell'ampio confronto tra *hellenismos* e cristianesimo, quale interviene a caratterizzare la *facies religiosa* tardoantica" (Cerutti 2015: 55).

³⁵⁰ Veltri (1992: 95) talks about a real Jewish Alexandrian 'apologetic strategy' aimed at opposing the tendency of hellenizing Jewish cultural elements which was spreading at the time.

mundo. Lastly, the third and most recent authorial (or better ‘argumentative’) level is represented by Eusebius who quotes Aristobulus’ version (though with minor or no alterations) in order to give value to the antiquity and superiority of the Jewish religion, of which Christianity was thought to be the completion. Centuries after the anonymous Jewish author and Aristobulus’ intervention on the text, Eusebius chose to quote Aristobulus’ fragment 4 and the *Hieros Logos* encapsulated in it with an aim which I would define as analogous to the one of the Alexandrian authors of the poem. This aim would be, in fact, to give value to the antiquity and superiority of the Jewish religious tradition and address a larger and more variegated audience.

However, Eusebius goes one step further stressing an argumentative turning point: as Veltri has significantly observed, he underlines and justifies the presence of elements of divine truth in pagan philosophy as indeed a ‘*praeparatio evangelica*’. The Christian reflection adds something to the concept of the superiority of Jewish wisdom, that is a theological and metaphysical component. It is not just about a dependence as in Alexandrian Judaism, but a theological and philosophical subordination of knowledge.³⁵¹ This represents indeed the final and decisive step forward which Eusebius takes in his authorial and argumentative intervention when quoting the *Hieros Logos*, thus marking the beginning of a Christian reception era for our *Testament of Orpheus*.

2.5 Cyril Of Alexandria

Born around 378 CE in Lower Egypt from a Christian family,³⁵² Cyril spent his early years in Alexandria where his uncle Theophilus was archbishop. Here he studied rhetoric and

³⁵¹ Veltri 1992: 86-94.

³⁵² On Cyril I would like to flag here the introductory works of Burguière-Évieux 1985, Masaracchia 1990, Russell 2000 and Moreschini 2004: 645-679.

pursued the ecclesiastical career, succeeding his uncle as archbishop of the city in 412. His intense activity as church leader was characterised by multiple battles fought not only against heresy³⁵³ but also against the Jews and the imperial prefect Orestes.

Gaining more and more power and influence over time, he later obtained the title of ‘patriarch’ and had an active role in the vibrant theological debate of his times, mostly on Christological issues. The ecclesiastic was later overthrown in 431 during the Council of Ephesus, guilty of having taken the decision to depose his arch-enemy Nestorius, but his honour was restored two years later when he was assigned another (minor) role as leader until his death in 444. His treatises are mostly apologetic works targeted against the Greeks (as the *Contra Julianum* shows), exegetical against Judaism (such as the commentaries to the Old and New Testament as well as the homilies on the New Testament) and critical towards heresies.

The *Contra Julianum*,³⁵⁴ as we can understand from the title, is an apologetic treatise composed between 434 and 441³⁵⁵ mainly against pagans and rhetorically targeted against emperor Julian and his *Against the Galileans*, as the author tells us in his opening dedication to emperor Theodosius II.³⁵⁶ Here and in other relevant passages which I will mention shortly the ecclesiastic underlines the general aim of the treatise, that is to show the recurrent theme of the antiquity of Mosaic wisdom and prove the falsehood of pagan beliefs. It is the author himself who states this in the first section of his work, where he also aims to demonstrate how Greek wise men, although partially speaking the truth, stole many of Moses’ words on the divine.³⁵⁷ As Russell shows, the aim of the apologetic work was to “counter the continuing influence of the apostate emperor’s treatise amongst pagans and

³⁵³ Russell 2000: 7. On his polemic against Nestorians see Russell 2000: 31-58.

³⁵⁴ For a general introduction to the *Contra Julianum* see Burguière-Évieux 1985: 10-20; Russell 2000: 67-69 and 190-191.

³⁵⁵ On the debate around the dating of the book see Burguière-Évieux 1985: 10-15 and Russell 2000: 190.

³⁵⁶ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.3.

³⁵⁷ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.4.

also to rally Christians whose faith might have been shaken by his arguments. [...] He works through Julian's text, setting down passages verbatim and responding to each in turn, producing, in effect, a dialogue or disputation".³⁵⁸

The first book of this treatise will be the focus of my analysis³⁵⁹ as it contains the quotation of two extremely important Orphic fragments which I will later examine: the hellenistic *Hieros Logos* and the reflective fragment on the voice of the Father from the Orphic *Oaths*, also cited in the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*. After having described the charges which Julian had brought against Christians and the fault of the majority of Greek philosophers,³⁶⁰ Cyril introduces the reader to the biblical figures of Moses,³⁶¹ Noah³⁶² and Abraham³⁶³ in order to prove the antiquity and superiority of the Mosaic revelation over Greek thinkers and in general over Greek cultural tradition and history.³⁶⁴

After having shown the illustrious examples of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses,³⁶⁵ however, the author goes on to demonstrate how even among the Greeks some thinkers and writers had seen a spark of truth, preaching the unity of the divinity. Among these the apologist enlists Homer³⁶⁶ and Orpheus; it is here, in fact, that we find the quotation of our Orphic *Hieros Logos*:

Ὅρφέα μὲν οὖν τὸν Οἰάγρου δεισιδαιμονέστατον φασὶ γενέσθαι τῶν ἄλλων καὶ φθάσαι μὲν τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν, ἅτε δὴ καὶ ἐν χρόνοις ὄντα πρεσβύτερον, ὥδ' αὖ καὶ ὕμνους τοῖς ψευδωνύμοις ἐξυφῆναι θεοῖς καὶ οὐκ ἀθαύμαστον ἐπὶ τούτῳ τὴν δόξαν ἐλεῖν, εἴτα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ δογμάτων κατεγνώκοντα, συνέντα τε ὅτι μονονουχὶ τὴν ἀμαξιτὸν ἀφείς ἐν

³⁵⁸ Russell 2000: 190-191.

³⁵⁹ On the structure of the book and its sub-divisions see Burguière-Évieux 1985: 14-15.

³⁶⁰ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.3-4.

³⁶¹ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.4-5.

³⁶² Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.6-8.

³⁶³ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.10.

³⁶⁴ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.11-16. The author thus starts a sort of 'comparative chronology' starting from the war of Troy.

³⁶⁵ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.22-30.

³⁶⁶ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.36-37.

ἐκβολῇ γέγονε τῆς εὐθείας ὁδοῦ μεταφοιτῆσαι πρὸς τὰ βελτίω καὶ τοῦ ψεύδους ἀνθελέσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, φάναι τε οὕτω περὶ Θεοῦ [...].³⁶⁷

And they say that Orpheus, son of Eagrus, was the most god-fearing among others and that he anticipated Homer's poetry, as he came before chronologically speaking, and that he composed songs and hymns for the false gods and he thus not surprisingly gained fame for this. Then, after having retracted his dogmatic statements and understood that he had almost taken the wrong path for having ignored the right track, he turned to the best path and replaced falsehood with truth, and thus spoke about the one God: [...].³⁶⁸

As I anticipated in the first section of this chapter, during the early phases of the Christian reception of pagan (and Orphic) sources we see a tendency to focus on defending the new faith from a doctrinal, ethical and political point of view, while 4th-5th century CE apologetic works became less aggressive and more encomiastic in tone. With Cyril, however, we see a slightly different attitude, possibly placed in between these two trends: on the one hand, in fact, Christianity seems to be affirming more and more strongly its influence over society. On the other, Christian authors see the new faith as threatened by a revival of old pagan beliefs: this is why we trace to Cyril's attitudes toward pagan texts both a tendency to include such Greek sources and another one to distance himself from these sources.

The quotation of the *Hieros Logos* falls into the pattern of apologetic strategy that I have defined as 'adaptation' and 'appropriation': the Hellenistic poem is quoted by Cyril in order to address the pagan audience 'seizing' one of its traditional legendary singers, give prestige to the antiquity of monotheism and trace the old Greek *sophia* back to Jewish wisdom. The role attributed to such a 'monotheistic' Orpheus who later in life speaks of the One God, however, is that of adorning the Christian theological argument, certainly not supporting it from a dogmatic point of view. It is interesting to notice how Cyril quotes this poem in the

³⁶⁷ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.35.

³⁶⁸ My translation.

first place, probably reading it from the *Cohortatio ad Graecos* as a close analysis of the textual variants shows.³⁶⁹

Another fragment which is probably taken from pseudo-Justin is our next Orphic fragment, fr. 620F (299 K) from the *Orphic Oaths*.³⁷⁰ Cyril's narration continues, in fact, with the mention of Greek philosophers and poets such as Pythagoras, Plato and Hermes Trismegistus who, even though in an incomplete and partially inconsistent way, were able to catch some aspects of the truth about divine unity and (to some extent) uniqueness.³⁷¹ Here we find the quotation of our Orphic fragment:

καὶ μὴν καὶ Ὀρφεὺς αὖθις οὕτω πού φησι·
Οὐρανὸν ὀρκίζω σε Θεοῦ μεγάλου σοφὸν ἔργον·
αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε Πατρός, ἣν φθέγγατο πρώτην,
ἡνίκα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἑαῖς στηρίζατο βουλαῖς.
[...] Λόγον αὐτοῦ φησιν, αἰεὶ συνυπάρχοντα τῷ Πατρί· οὐ γὰρ ἦν χρόνος ὅτε δίχα Λόγου τοῦ
ἰδίου νοοῖτ' ἂν ὑπάρχων ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατήρ· ἐν ταύτῳ δὲ καὶ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργὸν ἀπέφηνεν
ὄντα Θεόν.³⁷²

And also Orpheus, somewhere, says:

I adjure you by heaven, wise endeavour of a great god;
I swear by the voice of the father, who made it resound at first,
when he fixed all the cosmos according to his will.

[...] So he speaks of the *Logos*, which always exists together with the Father; in fact there was no time in which it was possible to think God and Father as separate from His own *Logos*; and at the same time he revealed God as creator of all things.³⁷³

The author, deeply involved in the theological and philosophical debates of his times, therefore decides to cite two 'reflective' Orphic sources to strengthen his argument of the partial truth about God contained in some Greek sources, although the superiority of Mosaic

³⁶⁹ See Russell 2000: 238. Zeegers also talks about an 'anthologie du plagiat' (Zeegers 1972: 180-228).

³⁷⁰ "Cyrille, en effet, dépend de la *Cohortatio*, où il a puisé non seulement le fragment 299 et le commentaire qui l'accompagne, mais encore le fragment 245-247 d'Orphée et le fragment 1025 de Sophocle" (Zeegers 1972: 214).

³⁷¹ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.38-45.

³⁷² Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.46.

³⁷³ My translation.

and Christian wisdom is always noted.³⁷⁴ Cyril therefore selects these two highly reflective texts, along with other philosophical fragments from various thinkers, to support his thesis of the spark of truth which can be found also in some of the most important Greek figures. As we shall see in the analysis of the fragment, Martin West discusses this text when speaking about what he calls ‘Jewish Orphica’.³⁷⁵ Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst, on the other hand, although taking into consideration the element of the appearance of the figure of the divine father (αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός), is careful about making strong statements. In fact, she is more inclined to consider this fragment as composed by a Greek poet close to an Orphic milieu and syncretistic henotheistic influences, then utilised by consecutive writers in order to convey Christian messages.³⁷⁶ I would tend to agree with Zeegers, since in analysing the main features of this fragment I will consider several elements as close to what we have previously defined as henotheistic characteristics of reflective beliefs: the one God as linked with Οὐρανός (see the *macranthropos* found in the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*, for example), the formula ‘θεοῦ μεγάλου’, the term ‘πατήρ’ as found in other henotheistic contexts (where the supreme god Zeus is represented as father of all things, demiurge and vivifying divine figure) and last but not least the role played by the *cosmos* as fixed (στηρίζατο) according to the god’s will.³⁷⁷

Furthermore, along with this adaptation of our two Orphic fragments as a whole, Cyril operates a detailed appropriation of the term *logos*. As I have mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the Orphic connotation of the word *logos* was often associated with traditional Greek philosophy or the written and oral mystery heritage (ἱερὸς λόγος, παλαιὸς λόγος, ὀρφικὸς λόγος),³⁷⁸ and the ‘challenge’ undertaken by Christian authors was that of

³⁷⁴ Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.50.

³⁷⁵ West 1983: 33-35.

³⁷⁶ Zeegers 1972: 215-216.

³⁷⁷ For the detailed analysis of all these features please see §3.4

³⁷⁸ Herrero 2010a: 288.

explaining the concept of the Incarnation of God in terms of the Holy Trinity through a specific terminology that could clarify the divine and creative nature of the *Logos*, a concept that was not known to the Greeks. We can here see an example of such an appropriation as Cyril does something along the lines of this apologetic strategy when he explains the divine unity of the God of the Jewish tradition using the terminology linked with the Orphic *logos*. Since the apologist quotes an Orphic fragment which deals with divine unity and explicitly mentions the ‘voice of the Father’, the author takes a step further and proceeds with a Christian exegesis of the fragment and of the word *logos*. Cyril observes in fact that even in ancient times – when inspired writers and singers talked about the One God – it was not possible to conceive ‘God and Father as separate from His own *Logos*’. At the same time, Cyril explains, Orpheus shows God as creator of all things, an aspect which we will see in many Orphic reflective sources and that I have often linked with henotheistic manifestations of Orphic beliefs.

Taking into consideration all these elements, I would like to argue that – as I have observed in the textual selection of Orphic fragments in pseudo-Justin – Cyril has selected two highly reflective henotheistic Orphic fragments as they conveyed an idea of divine unity and uniqueness which, although in my opinion to some extent Orphic, serves the purpose of closing the gap with the Greek literary and cultural tradition while at the same time subordinating it to Mosaic wisdom and ultimately to the Christian revelation.

The selection operated by Christian authors should therefore be taken into account when describing the different fragments and the way they have been classified by modern scholars. The henotheistic features of these fragments, I believe, are indeed the reason why they have been selected by Christian apologists, but these ancient scholars have in turn influenced the way we read those texts. Remembering this literary dynamic ‘cycle’ is therefore key to the analysis of the Orphic texts I have chosen to examine in this dissertation.

On another note, it is interesting to notice how Cyril follows the apologetic trend of placing the contact between Greek thinkers and the truth about divine unity in Egypt, thanks to Mosaic wisdom. As in the *De monarchia* and *Cohortatio*, the author appears to make reference to an earlier tradition according to which Orpheus went to Egypt, thus coming into contact with Mosaic wisdom and the Egyptian mysteries.³⁷⁹ It is debatable whether this legendary contact between Orpheus and Moses should be considered Orphic or not.³⁸⁰ In this respect, Jan Assman observes that in the 17th/18th century R. Cudworth sponsored a revival of such a legend, depicting Egypt as the land of so called ‘cosmotheism’, that is the belief and worship of the *cosmos* as supreme divine being, also expressed in pantheistic terms such as ἕν καὶ πᾶν – ‘One-and-All’: all is one, and one is the divine *cosmos*.³⁸¹ Indeed,

Cudworth's subject was not the transmission of Egyptian wisdom to the Hebrews. He was interested in its transmission to the Greeks. In this respect, Orpheus played precisely the same role of mediator as Moses did in the Biblical tradition. Orpheus was generally believed to have been initiated into the ‘Greater’ Egyptian mysteries. Egypt was thus connected to Europe in two ways: to Jerusalem via Moses and to Athens via Orpheus. The ‘Moses connection’ informed European theology and religion, whereas the ‘Orpheus connection’ influenced European philosophy. Orpheus brought the idea of *Hen kai pan* to Greece, where it influenced the philosophies of Pythagoras, Herakleitus, Parmenides, Plato, the Stoics, and others. *Hen kai pan*-the conviction that one is all and all is one-was

³⁷⁹ J. Assmann draws some parallels between Egyptian and Orphic initiations, observing that “in its topological aspect, the Egyptian initiation assumes the form of a descent into the depths of the earth. The most prominent ancient travellers into the netherworld, Orpheus and Aeneas, play a certain role in the reconstruction of the Egyptian initiation: Orpheus because he is associated with the Orphic hymns, some of which proclaim the theology of the One-and-All [...]” (Assmann 2014: 102).

³⁸⁰ See Jourdan 2010b: 199-202.

³⁸¹ “The term ‘cosmotheism’ had been coined by Lamoignon de Malesherbes with reference to the antique, especially Stoic worship of the *cosmos* or *mundus* as Supreme Being. [...] However, casting the idea of cosmotheism into the formula *Hen kai pan* meant tracing it back to its Egyptian origin. [...] It amounts not to an addition, but to an equation. In its most common form, the formula occurs as *Hen to pan*, ‘All Is One’, the world is God. This is what ‘cosmotheism’ means. Cudworth had shown that cosmotheism originated in Egypt, ‘from whence it was derived through Orpheus into Greece’” (Assmann 1998: 142).

believed to be the nucleus of a great tradition that began in Egypt and was handed down to modernity.³⁸²

Furthermore, it is interesting to notice how this legend of Orpheus learning monotheism in Egypt seems to anticipate modern studies undertaken by Freud³⁸³ on Mosaic wisdom and its hypothetical derivation from the Egyptians.³⁸⁴ Assmann introduced the notion of ‘Mosaic distinction’, namely the distinction not between one God vs many gods, but instead between the true God and false gods- the same distinction which we interestingly find also in the apologetic works we have so far analysed.³⁸⁵

2.6 Theodoret of Cyrus

Born in 393 CE in Antioch to a relatively wealthy family, Theodoret was educated in history, classical literature, biblical philology and theology.³⁸⁶ After having lived in a monastery close to Apamea for a few years, he was elected bishop of Cyrus around 423 CE: from that year onwards he dedicated his time to preaching and defending his community. Due to his closeness to the Nestorian doctrine,³⁸⁷ for which he also stood against Cyril of Alexandria, he was condemned to isolation until 451 CE when he was restored to his duties by emperor Marcian and allowed to take part in the council of Chalcedon. Here he gained back his episcopal role, which he maintained until his death around 466 CE. His literary production is vast, ranging from dogmatic to apologetic works, exegetical and historiographical. Within the apologetic genre we find the treatise that will be at the core of

³⁸² Assmann 1998: 141.

³⁸³ See Freud 1939.

³⁸⁴ See Jourdan 2010b: 128 n.268 and 270.

³⁸⁵ He therefore speaks of ‘monotheistic moments’ rather than an overnight ‘monotheistic shift’ (Assmann 2010: 3).

³⁸⁶ On Theodoret’s biography see Canivet 1958: 7-23 and Moreschini-Norelli 1999: 300-301.

³⁸⁷ On his theology see Moreschini 2004: 637-644.

my analysis of Theodoret as a source for the Christian reception of Orphic fragments: the *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, which contains the quotation of the Orphic *Hieros Logos*.

The *Cure for Pagan Maladies* (*Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*) represents the cure offered to pagans³⁸⁸ against ignorance of truth. The central topic is the relationship between Christian theology and the philosophical/literary Greek heritage, as we can understand from the subtitle associated with the treatise and found in the proem: ‘Εὐαγγελικῆς ἀληθείας ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς φιλοσοφίας ἐπίγνωσις’ that is ‘knowledge of the evangelic truth from Greek philosophy’.³⁸⁹ The aim was, indeed, that of attacking paganism without rejecting Greek philosophy as a whole, of which he was himself a great admirer.

The treatise thus oscillates between a harsh condemnation of the Greek religious heritage and the attempt to preserve the classical philosophical tradition trying to capture the underlying affinities with Scripture and, thanks to this, some sparks of divine truth. Indeed, the work represents a kaleidoscope of quotations from various philosophers, historians and poets, alternating error and truth, foolishness and wonderful intuitions. In fact we find many citations³⁹⁰ grouped together according to two main aims: they are mentioned as indirect testimonies of the truth about the One God, but at the same time as being unsatisfactory when compared to the Christian revelation.³⁹¹ The main sources for such quotations are, most probably, Clement and Eusebius,³⁹² although Canivet comments that “dans la *Thérapeutique* la citation est presque toujours littérale, alors que chez Clément elle est le plus souvent approximative; elle est ordinairement courte, réduite à l’essentiel, soigneusement analysée et enchâssée dans un commentaire suivi, alors que chez Eusèbe elle est parfois très longue et présentée sous une rubrique générale”.³⁹³

³⁸⁸ On his audience see Wilson 1985: 146-147.

³⁸⁹ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur. proem.* 16.

³⁹⁰ On the sources of the *Curatio* see Canivet 1958: 55-59 and Halton 2013: 7-11.

³⁹¹ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.120; 7.5-6; 11.38-42.

³⁹² In particular *Protrepticus*, *Stromateis* and *Praeparatio Evangelica*; see Canivet 1958: 57-58.

³⁹³ Canivet 1958: 55.

The *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* consists of 12 books or *discourses*.³⁹⁴ after a brief proem in which the author shows the main plan of the treatise and the title,³⁹⁵ the first book presents right away the theme of the metaphor of the disease of the soul³⁹⁶ and illustrates the main pillars of the Christian faith.³⁹⁷ References to classical culture are, in any case, unavoidable from the very beginning: some Greek philosophers would have indeed been able to grasp at least part of the divine truth about the One God thanks to a possible contact with Jewish wisdom in Egypt.³⁹⁸ The purifying effect of the Christian faith is described also quoting lines from Plato, Euripides and Heraclitus.³⁹⁹

Here we find the quotation of the Orphic *Hieros Logos* (item 21 in the Appendix)⁴⁰⁰ and references to the mysteries do not end here: they will become, in fact, an essential cultural connection used by Theodoret to demonstrate how Christian devotees should surrender to faith in order to know the mystery of Christ, just as the ancient worshippers had to go through the initiation process in order to join the secret mysteries.⁴⁰¹ We read indeed that

ταῦτα ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου τὰ ὄργια μαθὼν ὁ Ὀδρύσης Ὀρφεὺς εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα μετήνεγκε καὶ τὴν τῶν Διονυσίων ἑορτὴν διεσκεύασεν. Εἰ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τὰ δυσαγῇ ταῦτα καὶ βδελυρὰ ὄργια πᾶσιν ἐστι γνῶριμα, μόνοι δὲ αὐτὰ ᾔδεσαν οἱ ἱεροφάνται καλούμενοι, μανία σαφὴς τῶν παναγῶν καὶ θείων μυστηρίων πρό γε τῆς πίστεως τὴν γνῶσιν ἐπιζητεῖν.⁴⁰²

It was from Egypt, where he had learned these mysteries, that Orpheus of Odrysae imported them to Greece and organised the feast of Dionysus. Consequently, if the impious and scurrilous nature of these rites is not known to all, but only to the so-called

³⁹⁴ For a summary of the different parts of the treatise see Canivet 1958: 91-99 and Halton 2013: 1-7.

³⁹⁵ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1-17.

³⁹⁶ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.1-8.

³⁹⁷ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.90-92.

³⁹⁸ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.12-14.

³⁹⁹ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.85-89.

⁴⁰⁰ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.85-87.

⁴⁰¹ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.107-110.

⁴⁰² Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 1.114.

hierophants, it is clearly madness to seek knowledge of the divine and sacred mysteries prior to faith.⁴⁰³

The 2nd book is even more centred on the Christian revelation and its relationship with Greek philosophy: even though the Hellenic philosophers were often mistaken and at odds with one another,⁴⁰⁴ they were nonetheless able to grasp the truth about the divine (albeit partially) thanks to the knowledge of biblical wisdom -oldest and morally superior⁴⁰⁵ - which they acquired in Egypt.⁴⁰⁶ Theodoret here inserts the majority of the lines of the *Hieros Logos* in order to show how a prestigious representative of the mythical and cultural Hellenic heritage – Orpheus – came to know some of the divine matters on the One God in Egypt:

ὁ δὲ Ὀδρύσης Ὀρφεύς, καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀφικόμενος, τὰ περὶ τοῦ ὄντος οὕτω πως μεμάθηκε καὶ βοᾷ· [...].⁴⁰⁷ Ἄλλ' ὅμως καὶ ταῦτα παρ' Αἰγυπτίων μεμαθηκώς, οἱ παρ' Ἑβραίων μαθήματά τινα τῆς ἀληθείας παρέλαβον, παρέμιξε τοῦ πλάνου τῇ θεολογίᾳ τινὰ καὶ τῶν Διονυσίων καὶ Θεσμοφορίων τὰ δυσαγῇ παρεδέδωκεν ὄργια, καὶ οἷόν τι μῆλιτι περιχρίσας τὴν κύλικα, τὸ δηλητήριον πόμα τοῖς ἐξαπατωμένοις προσφέρει.⁴⁰⁸

Likewise, Orpheus of Odrysae, when he arrived in Egypt, learned in some such way about ontology and said: [...]. Nevertheless, having learned these things from the Egyptians, who had come by some elements of the truth in the teachings of the Hebrews, he intermingled some of their error in his theology. He also transmitted the accursed orgies of the feasts of Dionysia and Thesmophoria, and coating, so to speak, the rim of the goblet with honey, he offers this poisonous brew to those who have been deceived.⁴⁰⁹

The apologist therefore chose to select Orpheus as a symbol of a conversion to monotheism which took place thanks to contact with the Mosaic tradition.

⁴⁰³ Transl. Halton 2013: 41.

⁴⁰⁴ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 2.8-20.

⁴⁰⁵ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 2.43-50.

⁴⁰⁶ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 2.21-31.

⁴⁰⁷ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 10-11. from Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.5, followed by fr. 377 F (245 K.), 14-15a and fr. 378 F (247 K.), 29-35. from Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.5 and Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.124 and 127.

⁴⁰⁸ Theod. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 2.30-31.

⁴⁰⁹ Transl. Halton 2013: 51-52.

The narrative continues with the exposition of the concept of the Holy Trinity,⁴¹⁰ which according to the author was grasped also by Greek authors such as Plato⁴¹¹ and the Neoplatonists,⁴¹² and with the demonstration of the falsehood of some Hellenic theogonies and cosmogonies.⁴¹³ The 2nd book ends with in-depth analysis of the concept of the Holy Trinity and *Logos*,⁴¹⁴ postponing to the following books the examination of the authentic root of true wisdom.

2.7 The Tübingen Theosophy

The treatise that goes under the name⁴¹⁵ of the *Tübingen Theosophy*⁴¹⁶ is a Byzantine epitome dated to the 8th century CE which refers to an appendix⁴¹⁷ to a lost longer treatise in 7 books called *Περὶ τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως (On true belief)*⁴¹⁸ written around 500 CE. The volume, which is referred to also as the *Theosophy*, is known to us not only thanks to this epitome but also through various fragments found later on.⁴¹⁹ It represents a collection of numerous testimonies and oracles of the Greek gods on the theme of divine unity and uniqueness, of Trinity and Incarnation, composed in order to show the ultimate harmony of pagan wisdom and Christian revelation, a harmony which Beatrice defined as a kind of '*symphonia*'.⁴²⁰ The Greek traditional heritage, as far as it expresses statements on the One God and His son,

⁴¹⁰ Theod. Graec. Aff. Cur. 2.56-70.

⁴¹¹ Theod. Graec. Aff. Cur. 2.71-81.

⁴¹² Theod. Graec. Aff. Cur. 2.82-94.

⁴¹³ Theod. Graec. Aff. Cur. 2.95-103.

⁴¹⁴ Theod. Graec. Aff. Cur. 2.106-111.

⁴¹⁵ On the title, the use of the term 'theosophy' and its relationship with Porphyry's *Philosophia ex Oraculis* see Beatrice 1995: 413 and 2001: xxv-xxx.

⁴¹⁶ For a general introduction see Erbse 1995: ix-lviii, Beatrice 1995, 1996 and 2001: xi-lxvii.

⁴¹⁷ *Theos. Tub. (Epit.)* 1-2, 5. The critical edition which I will here use is that of Beatrice 2001.

⁴¹⁸ Beatrice (1995: 405) refers to the *Theosophy* as a 'justificatory supplement' to this work – which concerns the doctrine of Trinity and other Christological matters.

⁴¹⁹ For the manuscript tradition see Erbse 1995: ix-xix, xxiv-xlvi and Beatrice 2001: l-lx.

⁴²⁰ Beatrice 2001: xx.

should therefore “not be rejected in any way; God makes use of the sages in order to pass on his teachings to the nations”.⁴²¹

The dating of the treatise is usually placed between the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century CE (most likely between 491 and 503),⁴²² while the place of composition is usually located within the Alexandrian environment.⁴²³ This hypothesis derives from a few elements such as the profound knowledge of the Hellenic, Roman and Egyptian literary and religious traditions, the references to the Septuagint when quoting the Bible⁴²⁴ and the apologetic nature of the collection which is often linked with the Alexandrian milieu of the time. The identity of the author of the collection is still unclear:⁴²⁵ Beatrice hypothesised Severus of Antioch⁴²⁶ – the theologian and archbishop of Antioch who lived between the 5th and 6th centuries CE. Indeed, he was knowledgeable in Greek and Latin literature (which he had studied in Alexandria)⁴²⁷ and converted to Christianity after spending his youth worshipping pagan gods:⁴²⁸ this complex religious experience could have allowed him to handle and quote both Hellenic and Egyptian oracular texts, as well as the treatises of the apologetic fathers.⁴²⁹ In fact, his sources⁴³⁰ are probably to be located in works such as the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, Cyril’s *Contra Julianum* and Lactantius’ *Divinae Institutiones*,⁴³¹ thus making the *Theosophy* a kind of climax of this long apologetic tradition as Beatrice observes.⁴³²

⁴²¹ Beatrice 1995: 404.

⁴²² Erbse 1995: xiv; Beatrice 2001: xl-xlii.

⁴²³ Beatrice 2001: xlii-xlv.

⁴²⁴ Beatrice 2001: xlv.

⁴²⁵ “De ipso Theosophiae auctore nil fere scimus. Credideris theologum eum fuisse, artis grammaticae scriptorumque antiquitatis veterum peritum. Vixisse videtur Alexandriae; compluriens enim verba Septuagintae secundum recensionem Alexandrinam in testimonium vocavit” (Erbse 1995: xiii-xiv).

⁴²⁶ Beatrice 1995: 416-418 and 2001: xlv-l.

⁴²⁷ He could, in fact, quote Virgil and Lactantius: see Beatrice 1995: 416 n. 66.

⁴²⁸ Beatrice 2001: xlv-xlvi.

⁴²⁹ Beatrice 1995: 416.

⁴³⁰ Beatrice 1995: 405.

⁴³¹ On the author’s sources see Beatrice 1995: 406-410.

⁴³² Beatrice 2001: xxiii.

The work presents a relatively organic and systematic structure,⁴³³ and can be divided into 4 main books:⁴³⁴ in the first one the oracles of the Greek gods are presented, while in the second one we see the definitions of the theologies of the Greek and Egyptian wise men. The third section is dedicated to the Sibylline oracles which appear to be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.⁴³⁵ Finally, the fourth book contains quotations from the writings of the Persian king Hystaspes regarding the mystery of Incarnation⁴³⁶ and ends with a universal history from Adam to the emperor Zeno (XPONIKON).

The collection contains quotes from various ‘theological’ oracles on the nature of the divine and the human soul,⁴³⁷ especially those of Apollo,⁴³⁸ Sarapis⁴³⁹ and Artemis,⁴⁴⁰ as well as poetic⁴⁴¹ and philosophical⁴⁴² works. The quoted passages are always introduced by the conjunction ὅτι to better stress the nature of the treatise -that it is a collection of sayings and quotes from different sources.⁴⁴³ Together with these quotations the author also offers to readers selected texts attributed to some legendary figures which often appear in Christian apologetic sources: Hermes,⁴⁴⁴ the Sibyl (in the 3rd book) and Orpheus. The first passage in which we meet our legendary singer concerns the names with which the solar divinity was known among the Greeks and Egyptians:

⁴³³ Beatrice 2001: xxi.

⁴³⁴ According to the critical edition of Beatrice 2001.

⁴³⁵ *Theos. Tub.* 3.1-29.

⁴³⁶ *Theos. Tub.* 4.1-6.

⁴³⁷ On the notion of ‘theological oracles’ Cerutti (2015: 39 n. 26) observes that “‘Oracolo teologico’, come è noto, è definizione che a partire da Nock designa quella produzione oracolare che nei secoli del tardoantico si esprime sulla natura del dio sommo, la funzione degli dei tradizionali, l’anima umana e i mezzi per ottenere la salvezza”.

⁴³⁸ Among others: *Theos. Tub.* 1.1, 2, 5, 16, 18.

⁴³⁹ *Theos. Tub.* 1.22.

⁴⁴⁰ *Theos. Tub.* 1.52.

⁴⁴¹ See for example the mention of verses from Pindar (*Theos. Tub.* 2.23), Simonides (*Theos. Tub.* 2.24), Euripides (*Theos. Tub.* 2.26).

⁴⁴² Such as Plato (*Theos. Tub.* 2.7, 8, 11) and Socrates (*Theos. Tub.* 2.10).

⁴⁴³ Beatrice (1995: 407) believes he can identify the *Cohortatio ad Graecos* as source of some quotations of the *Theosophy*.

⁴⁴⁴ *Theos. Tub.* 1.28-29.

ὅτι τινὲς ἐδόξασαν τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα εἶναι καὶ Ἥλιον· Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ τὸν Ἥλιον Ὅσιριν ὠνόμασαν· μεθερμηνεύεται δὲ Ἑλληνικῇ διαλέκτῳ Ὅσιρις ὁ πολυ<ό>φθαλμος ἀπὸ τοῦ πάντῃ ἐπιβάλλοντα τὸν ἥλιον τὰς ἀκτῖνας ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμοῖς πολλοῖς πᾶσαν βλέπειν τὴν γῆν. τινὲς δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ Σ<ε>ίριον αὐτὸν παρωνύμως ὠνόμασαν, ἕτεροι δὲ Διόνυσον ὥς καὶ Ὀρφεύς·

Τοῦνεκά μιν καλέουσι Φάνητά τε καὶ Διόνυσον.⁴⁴⁵

Some believe that Apollo was also Helios; and the Egyptians call Helios Osiris; and in Greek Osiris is rendered as 'he who has many eyes' because of the fact that the sun directs his rays everywhere almost like watching the entire earth with many eyes. Some of the Greeks also call him with a second name Sirius, while others Dionysus like Orpheus:

and this is why they call him Phanes and Dionysus.⁴⁴⁶

The excerpts indicate some names with which the sun god was known among the Egyptians (Osiris) and the Greeks. According to the passage the Greeks indeed meant this god when they syncretistically invoked Apollo, Sirius or even Dionysos -an association which is here attributed to Orpheus himself. The Orphic verse which is here quoted, collected by Kern in the group of fragments that are related to Dionysos, proposes an identification between the Sun and Dionysos⁴⁴⁷ and represents the third verse of a more ample poem reported in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius and partly in Diodorus.⁴⁴⁸ What I would like to stress is that the Orphic verse is here contextualised within the aims and features of the *Tübingen Theosophy*. We see, in fact, a typical tendency of syncretising the divine around three main gods: Dionysos, Apollo and Helios.⁴⁴⁹

Orpheus is mentioned again in the second chapter of the 2nd book where the *Hieros Logos* is quoted as an example of a text in which a legendary figure of the Greek mythological past has come into contact with the truth about the divine and even converted to the One God of the biblical tradition:

⁴⁴⁵ *Theos. Tub. (Proem.)* 3.

⁴⁴⁶ My translation.

⁴⁴⁷ Fr. 540 F (237 K.) in fr. 236-244 K.

⁴⁴⁸ Macrobius, *Saturn.* 1.18.12 and Diodorus, *Sic. Bibl.* 1.11.3 = fr. 540 F (237 K.), 3.

⁴⁴⁹ Bernabé 2005a: 112-113.

ὅτι Ὀρφεύς, ὁ Οἰάγρου τοῦ Θρακός, πρότερον μὲν ὕμνους τινὰς εἰς τοὺς ἐξαγίστους θεοὺς ἐξυφάνας καὶ τὰς μιὰς γενέσεις αὐτῶν διηγησάμενος, εἶτα συνεῖς ὥσπερ τὸ δυσσεβὲς τοῦ πράγματος, μετέθηκεν ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ μόνον καλόν, καὶ τὸν ὄντως ὕμνων θεὸν καὶ τὴν τῶν πάλαι Χαλδαίων σοφίαν [δηλαδή τὴν τοῦ Ἀβραάμ] ἐπαινῶν παραινεῖ τῷ ἰδίῳ παιδὶ Μουσαίῳ τοῖς μὲν φθάσασι μυθευθῆναι μὴ πείθεσθαι, τοῖς δὲ ῥηθήσεσθαι μέλλουσι προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν. Ἔστι δὲ τὰ ἔπη ταῦτα [...].⁴⁵⁰

Orpheus, son of Oeagrus from Thrace, who first composed hymns for the wicked gods and narrated their impure genealogies then, after having so to speak realised how sacrilegious the thing was, turned his mind to the only (great) good. Singing about the true god and the wisdom of the ancient Chaldeans (that is that of Abraham), he exhorts his very own son Musaeus not to be persuaded by the previous myths but to turn his attention to those which are about to come. And these are his words: [...].⁴⁵¹

The essential thesis of the *Theosophy* is therefore confirmed: a fundamental harmony existed between the words of the legendary Greek poets and philosophers (which thus should not be refused)⁴⁵² and the divine truth unveiled by Christianity.

I will not here analyse in detail the *Tübingen* version of our *Hieros Logos*,⁴⁵³ but I would just like to stress that this version is the longest and most recent one at our disposal.⁴⁵⁴ Here, as observed by N. Zeegers, the anonymous Christian author of the *Theosophy* adds “la transformation en prédication messianique et en allusion à l’incarnation du Christ des vers 16-19 qui chez Eusèbe sont de coloration stoïcienne”.⁴⁵⁵ The author believes he can find in the *Hieros Logos* not only the influence of the Hebrew Bible but also that of the Christian revelation: he indeed tells us how Orpheus exhorts his readers to turn their attention to those mysteries which will happen in the future.

⁴⁵⁰ *Theos. Tub.* 2.2.

⁴⁵¹ My translation.

⁴⁵² *Theos. Tub. (Proem.)* 2.

⁴⁵³ For a brief analysis see Beatrice 2001: xxxii-xxxiii.

⁴⁵⁴ Zeegers 1972: 197.

⁴⁵⁵ Zeegers 1972: 197.

One last observation on the relationship between the *Tübingen Theosophy* and Jewish culture:⁴⁵⁶ the attitude of the anonymous author of the *Theosophy* towards the Jews is generally negative: we find in fact various cases of a harsh critique due to their insolence,⁴⁵⁷ for not having accepted the new Messiah⁴⁵⁸ or having put Jesus to death.⁴⁵⁹ Although the tradition of the Hebrew Bible is considered to be the foundation of the future Christian revelation, Jewish people are harshly criticised mainly for having betrayed the true meaning of Scripture and condemned the son of God. However, we do find an exception to this attitude, that is, the prestigious biblical figure of Moses: his religious stature is said to be extraordinary, so much so that he is even quoted in an oracular text in which Apollo exalts Moses together with the Egyptian Hermes and Apollonius of Tyana, the only ones able to contemplate the divine.⁴⁶⁰ I would therefore argue that the decision to quote the longest version of the *Hieros Logos* (expanded by Aristobulus in order to include the biblical figures of Abraham and Moses) is linked with the anonymous Christian author's aim to further highlight the exceptionality of Moses' role.⁴⁶¹ Furthermore, in the last passage of the *Theosophy* in which Orpheus appears as a speaking voice we read two verses taken from the *Rhapsodies*⁴⁶² in which the Dionysos-Phanes couple returns with clear messianic connotations (item 22 in the Appendix).⁴⁶³

I would therefore observe here, after this brief analysis of the Orphic passages in the *Tübingen Theosophy*, that the figure of Orpheus and some specific divinities linked with him are particularly relevant for the aim of my research and should be connected with a

⁴⁵⁶ See Beatrice 2001: xxx-xxxiii.

⁴⁵⁷ *Theos. Tub.* 1.53.

⁴⁵⁸ *Theos. Tub.* 3 A 1.19.

⁴⁵⁹ *Theos. Tub.* 3 A 1.26-29.

⁴⁶⁰ *Theos. Tub.* 1.40.

⁴⁶¹ Lines 41-42 of the *Hieros Logos*: 'ὡς λόγος ἀρχαίων, ὡς ὑδογενῆς διέταξεν / ἐκ θεόθεν γνώμην τε λαβὼν καὶ δίπλακα θεσμόν' (*Theos. Tub.* 2.3).

⁴⁶² On the *Rhapsodies* see Kern 1922: 140-141 and Bernabé 2004: 97-101.

⁴⁶³ *Theos. Tub.* 2.9.

henotheistic tendency in specific Orphic cult manifestations and (in this case) streams of thought and mythology. Guthrie had already started talking about a tendency towards unification of Orphic deities also in relation to Phanes and Dionysos, seeing it as a possible step towards monotheism.⁴⁶⁴ However, I would tend not to agree with his statements about syncretism as a possible stage towards a monotheistic expression, and I would rather define it as a partial consonance, at least as seen by the early receivers of the texts.

I also argue that the selection process lying behind the choice of the anonymous Christian author of the *Theosophy* is not random but carefully operated according to specific apologetic strategies. The compiler is interested in an existing henotheistic and syncretistic Orphic tendency already present (although partly) in early Orphic writings- that is before wider Hellenistic syncretistic tendencies. This involves both the intuitive side of the Orphic religious manifestation (the side of active religion, in Guthrie's words) and the more reflective one (the side of doctrine). Such a process of selection of henotheistic and syncretistic Orphic fragments according to specific apologetic strategies is, indeed, what I have tried to illustrate throughout this chapter and finds here a further example.

⁴⁶⁴ Guthrie 1935: 100. See discussion in §1.5

3. Henotheism in Orphic Reflective Sources

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the most important Orphic fragments that I here link to more reflective belief sources which express henotheistic views on the divine. As we have seen in the introduction, in line with the observations made about religious phenomena using a cognitive approach by scholars such as Scott Atran, Dan Sperber and Pascal Boyer, it is possible to trace a distinction among different religious henotheistic tendencies between an approach to the divine which is less aware of the perception of the god(s) and another which is more aware of the intellectual position towards the divine, reflects on its condition and on the characteristics and status of this divine.

Distinguishing between more intuitive and non-committal beliefs ('factual intuitions')⁴⁶⁵ and more deliberate reflective beliefs (the result of intellectual activity and reflection on divine agents) is a helpful and fruitful way to approach the study of Orphic henotheism. However, this distinction should also be used with great care. These categories should always be considered examining and comparing different sources, without being bound by restrictive limits and always making reference to the wider historical, cultural and literary contexts. What we call 'reflective' sources may have an intuitive side and background, and what we define as 'intuitive' sources have often undergone a certain kind of re-elaboration and poeticization. The Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* for example might be considered an interesting case of confluence between a reflective context (that is, a theogonic narrative framework in which an intellectual activity is taking place) and a more intuitive kind of expression, that is a possible henotheistic ritual occasion lying behind the genre of the hymn set in the theogony.

⁴⁶⁵ Atran 2002: 113.

3.1 The Orphic Hymn To Zeus

One of the sources in which a reflection is offered on a one god (here Zeus) emerging from the plurality of the polytheistic structure is the *Hymn to Zeus*. The Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*⁴⁶⁶ has been passed down in four versions different in content and length, variously characterised by alterations but of which it is possible to trace a permanent nucleus, coherent with other traditional elements of Orphic literature.⁴⁶⁷ For the full text of all the four versions please refer to the Appendix – Item 23.

The first version, shortest and earliest, is to be found in the Derveni Papyrus⁴⁶⁸ and is generally traced to the beginning of the 5th century BCE.⁴⁶⁹ The second version, longer and more complex, is cited in the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo*.⁴⁷⁰ The third one, the longest and most complex, is found in the *Rhapsodies* and dates back to the 1st century BCE.⁴⁷¹ This third version of the hymn was also the object of our analysis in the previous chapter of this thesis, where we examined the passage in the third chapter of the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius which cites this text,⁴⁷² together with Porphyry's comment.⁴⁷³ Eusebius proceeds

⁴⁶⁶ For an introduction to the hymn and related bibliography, see Bianchi 1970 and 1975: 253-260; West 1983: 89, 218, 239; Bernabé 2004: 205-214 (fr. 243 F [59+168 K.]) and 2010; Herrero 2010a: 187-190.

⁴⁶⁷ A general overview of the different versions and of the features of the divinity that emerge from these versions may be found in, for example, Bernabé 2010a.

⁴⁶⁸ For an introduction, critical edition, translation and comment of the Derveni Papyrus I would like to point out, among others, Laks-Most 1997; Jourdan 2003; Betegh 2004; Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006; Bernabé 2007b, 2010a and 2010b and the ample bibliography which is cited in those works.

⁴⁶⁹ Fr. 14 F.

⁴⁷⁰ Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.) = *De mundo* 7.401a, 25. For an introduction on the *De mundo*, see Radice 1995: 11-41 and Thom 2014.

⁴⁷¹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.) = Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.8.2 = Porph. Fr. 354 F Smith.

⁴⁷² Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.8.2.

⁴⁷³ Porphyry's comment corresponds to Porph. *De sim.* fr. 3 Bidez. The treatise *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, which we can read mostly thanks to Eusebius, is a reflection on *simulacra* and sacred representations seen and intended as symbolic instruments, fundamental in order to gain access to a higher level of knowledge. The work therefore represents an attempt to express and communicate a harmony between traditional religion and Neoplatonic philosophy, in which Porphyry expresses the possibility of portraying the invisible through the visible (Porph. *De sim.* fr. 1 Bidez). The Neoplatonic philosopher may have chosen to insert the *Hymn to Zeus* in this treatise

with the analysis not only of the Orphic text but also of the Neoplatonic interpretation of the hymn. This allows us to examine not only the text of the hymn but also the comments and interpretations of a Greek late Neoplatonic philosopher and of a Christian author who firmly distances himself from the original Orphic text (as does Porphyry, in a different way). Furthermore, in commenting on the hymn, Eusebius quotes biblical passages and images which can also be found in the *Hieros Logos/Testament*, thus making Eusebius' analysis extremely interesting also for comparing the characteristics and features of both the *Hymn to Zeus* and the Alexandrian Jewish text. Lastly, the fourth version of the hymn was published in 2005 and is contained in a section of a Florentine papyrus which reports verses from Euripides.⁴⁷⁴

The features of the one god which emerge from the different versions of the hymn are not contrasting, but constitute instead a sufficiently coherent nucleus, although with expansions as well as different traits and connotations.⁴⁷⁵ Alberto Bernabé comments that the second version maintains the fundamental features of the first one, that are mainly related to Zeus as ἀρχός (monarch and beginning) of all things, but adds a new characteristic, that of assuming in himself both the sexes (male and female features), as well as the description of the world as composed by four elements. He goes on to comment that the version of the *Rhapsodies* keeps the main features of the first two versions, perfecting the theory of the four elements which then included the cyclical return. The most characteristic fact of this third version would be, according to Bernabé, that the poet (composer of the hymn) moves from summarising the theogony to producing a more articulated image of the cosmic god Zeus, in

because he considered the hymn as a 'voiced ᾄσμα', a sort of *simulacrum* that could be performed loudly or silently and inwardly. I would like to refer to Bidez 1964: 143-157, Girgenti-Muscolino 2011: 280-315 and Johnson 2013 for a complete bibliography on the matter. For a philological comment on the text see Bidez 1964: 3*-7*.

⁴⁷⁴ Fr. 688a F = fr. 2, col. I Bastianini-Casanova. For a bibliographical introduction to the Florentine papyrus see Bernabé 2007a: 461-463 (fr. 688a F).

⁴⁷⁵ See Bernabé 2010a: 67.

what I would describe as a more reflective perspective and context.⁴⁷⁶ Eventually, the last version appears to be the ‘less poetic’ but with its more precise and philosophical language it also appears closer to a more direct and Stoic position.⁴⁷⁷ It is possible to read it in a section of the Florentine papyrus (PSI XV 1476)⁴⁷⁸ contained in an anthology reporting poetic passages of gnomic nature,⁴⁷⁹ and divided into two groups of hexameters.⁴⁸⁰ It stresses the coincidence between god and the universe in a strictly Stoic and pantheistic point of view in which Zeus is described as earthly, chthonic and marine. Concepts such as self-sufficiency (αὐτός), completeness (πᾶς) and omnipotence along with his cyclic nature (κύκλος, κυκλεῖται) are at the centre of the author’s interest.⁴⁸¹ The main focus of this analysis will be on the version of the *Rhapsodies*, which presents the most important features in terms of literary form and contents. However, it seems important to give an overview of the main features related to the one god that emerge also from the first two versions of the hymn in order to further reinforce my argument about the henotheistic view which is conveyed in this Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*.

The first version of the hymn is found in the Derveni Papyrus, a 2.60 m long roll found carbonized in the remains of the funeral pyre in a tomb in the ancient Macedonian district of Mygdonia in excavations in 1962. The text, written on the fragile papyrus, was composed in columns, 26 of which have been reconstructed and then collected in 266 fragments. While the papyrus is generally dated around 340 BCE,⁴⁸² the text might have been originally

⁴⁷⁶ Bernabé 2010a: 79-90.

⁴⁷⁷ Bernabé 2010a: 90-94.

⁴⁷⁸ For a bibliographical introduction to the Florentine papyrus see Bernabé 2007a: 461-463 (fr. 688a F).

⁴⁷⁹ For the contents and structure of this anthological section see Bastianini-Casanova 2005: 227-234.

⁴⁸⁰ Bastianini-Casanova 2005: 236. For a general analysis of the section see Bastianini-Casanova 2005: 234-239.

⁴⁸¹ See Bernabé 2010a: 94.

⁴⁸² See for example Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 9.

composed around the turn of the 5th century BCE in a dialect which presents both Attic and Ionic features⁴⁸³ and with a rather informal style (often in first person singular).

While the first six columns mostly contain listings of prayers and sacrifices, cultic honours and libations, the other twenty are of fundamental importance for the aim of our research since they present passages from the *Orphic Hymns*⁴⁸⁴ and quotations attributed to Orpheus, as the author of the text states.⁴⁸⁵ The fragments provide an overview of what appears to be the account of an Orphic theogony,⁴⁸⁶ containing elements from a specific cosmologic and cosmogonic view, strictly interrelated with the author's commentary.⁴⁸⁷ Theokritos Kouremenos, in his introductory chapter to the edition of the papyrus, draws an outline of the different hypotheses that have been proposed by various scholars in order to throw light on the complex figure of the author of the Derveni commentary.⁴⁸⁸ West, for example, is of the opinion that the Rhapsodist may have been a 'religious specialist' who gives an account of various rites and theogonic narrations to an Orphic/Bacchic society, far from the milieu of composition of the original theogony.⁴⁸⁹ Kouremenos stresses how the author embraces a reflective approach in commenting on the Orphic poem, with a high degree of commitment and awareness of his social and intellectual role: "the author's account, at least of the Orphic poem, is of a very innovative and eccentric sort, influenced by the natural philosophy of Ionia [...]; such societies always reserved a place for the speculative

⁴⁸³ Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 11-19.

⁴⁸⁴ See also Sider 2014: 225-229.

⁴⁸⁵ Col. VII, 2-11.

⁴⁸⁶ For a summary of the debate around the original text see Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 25-28.

⁴⁸⁷ "In the commentator's hands, this text of Orpheus, which he considers allegorical, becomes a physical cosmogony, in-between the Presocratics' cosmogony and the later Stoics', according to which Zeus is Air and Mind and always exists, and acts upon the primary particles of matter to generate the things that become" (Bernabé 2010b: 79).

⁴⁸⁸ Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 45-58.

⁴⁸⁹ West 1983: 108-113.

theologian who [...] was ready to explain to the members the esoteric meaning of their rites and holy texts or myths”.⁴⁹⁰

The fragment of the *Hymn to Zeus* has been put together by Bernabé and derives from the combination of different verses belonging to different columns of the papyrus, in particular col. XVIII, 12-13, XVII, 12 and XIX, 10.⁴⁹¹ It is evident from the text that the focus of this version of the hymn is on the figure of Zeus as a one god who appears to be ἀρχός, monarch and beginning of all things, but also centre and totality of the universe. The repetition of the name of Zeus seems to recall eulogistic contexts in which the main god is identified as the most important one, and it contributes to shape the divine figure as ‘absolutely everything’ (indeed, the terms [π]άντα and πάντων appear four times in three verses).

I will later analyse the (apparently) paradoxical statements that are found at the beginning of the hymn (Ζεὺς πρῶτος [γένετο, Ζεὺς] ὕστατος) and that are also typical of certain Orphic texts and concepts.⁴⁹² The only verse that requires an in-depth examination here is the third one, which is unique to this Derveni version:

[Ζεὺς πνοὴ πάντων, Ζεὺς πάντων ἔπλετο] μοῖρα⁴⁹³

⁴⁹⁰ Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 47.

⁴⁹¹ For the critical edition and comment of the passage I make reference to Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou 2006: 95-99. See also Sider 2014: 233, 247.

⁴⁹² Bernabé (Bernabé 2010a: 73) quotes, for instance, the examples of σῶμα-σῆμα (see among others fr. 430 F) and βίος, θάνατος, βίος of the Orphic tablets (see fr. 463 F).

⁴⁹³ Fr. 14 F, 3. This quoted verse is a restoration by Merkelbach (Merkelbach 1967b: 24 [coll. Fr. 31, 5]) followed by Bernabé. West, on the contrary, reconstructs it as: [Ζεὺς πάντων τέλος αὐτὸς ἔχει, Ζεὺς] Μοῖρα [κραταιή], commenting that “the commentator explains Moira as a current (*pneuma*) in the universal Air. But there is no reason to think that he had in this text the verse ‘Zeus is the breath of all, Zeus the impulse of tireless fire’ which appears in the Stoic version of the passage. [...] It looks like a specifically Stoic interpolation” (West 1983: 90 n. 36). We accept Merkelbach/Bernabé’s restoration on the base of Merkelbach’s discussion in Merkelbach 1967b: 24-25. Indeed, he introduces the discussion saying that “In dieser Columne ist noch von denselben Versen die Rede; doch scheint – vielleicht schon oben – noch ein weiterer Vers herangezogen zu sein, wonach ‘Zeus’ der Atem aller Dinge, die Luft ist, also etwa ‘Ζεὺς πνοὴ πάντων’ (fr. 21a, 5 K.). πνοὴ ‘Atem’ wäre vom Erklärer mit ἀήρ “Luft” erklärt worden” (Merkelbach 1967a: 24). He then proceeds with the clarification thanks to the commentator’s notes. See Bernabé 2004: 26 for the full explanation of the restoration. I am, however, aware of the fact that the Derveni papyrus (col. XVIII) has a discussion of the relationship between Zeus and Moira, but we do not know what the poem actually said.

Zeus is the breath of all things, of all things is Zeus the fate.⁴⁹⁴

The fact that Zeus is described as divine breath of all things seems to underline the creative and vivifying power of Zeus, whose role as ἀρχός appears to be the main focus of both the author and the commentator of the Derveni's hymn. Indeed, I argue that this can be considered as one aspect of the henotheistic (theopantistic) figure of Zeus which, as we shall later see, both creates and penetrates (here, inflates) all things without however fully identifying with them. The description of Zeus as ἀρχός, meaning the beginning of all things and the (new) starting point of history is also stressed by the identification with fate/μοῖρα as Bernabé has pointed out:

La identificación con la Moira, que es la personificación del destino, tiene sentido si Zeus, asumida la sabiduría de la Noche, que conoce todos los oráculos, sabe cuanto va a ocurrir y si su organización racional del nuevo universo le permite controlar la organización del tiempo.⁴⁹⁵

Zeus is therefore in control of time, both present and future: the aim of his identification with the personification of destiny seems to have been inserted mainly to show this aspect of the one god. These first four verses of the first version of the hymn therefore condense and anticipate the main features of the god that I will later analyse and synthesise: Zeus as beginning (principle), centre and end of the world, of which he represents also the divine artisan and ruler. Furthermore, he thus appears to be an immanent part of that world (divine breath) but also transcendent (creator), in control of all time and destiny.

Moving on to the *De mundo* version, it is worth briefly mentioning here that this short treatise, dated back to the Hellenistic period and ascribed to Aristotle, mainly discusses the figure and role of god as a transcendent ruler and preserver of the *cosmos*.⁴⁹⁶ The structure of the treatise appears to be clear: to a first section reporting a description of the *cosmos*

⁴⁹⁴ My translation.

⁴⁹⁵ Bernabé 2010a: 75.

⁴⁹⁶ For an introduction to this work see Radice 1995: 11-41 and Thom 2014: 3-17.

corresponds a second one illustrating cosmic harmony and the role of god as its divine ruler. The style is simple and descriptive but also refined and ambitious. This philosophical and doctrinal text appears to be, therefore, an example of a reflective source in which the anonymous author, writing for a general educated public,⁴⁹⁷ is trying to convey a peculiar cosmo-theology and a specific view of god as well as its relationship with the universe.

As we have previously seen, this second version of the hymn presents the same fundamental features as the first one -Zeus as ἀρχός, monarch and beginning of all things- but adds two new main characteristics: that of assuming in himself both the sexes (male and female features),⁴⁹⁸ and the description of the world as composed by four elements. In being both male and female the god thus appears complete also from a sexual point of view, absorbing both sexes and embodying a sort of ‘fecundating’ symbol of fertility who does not require a counterpart to give birth and (re)create all things.

The primary role that is given in this work to the relation between this (partly) immanent god and the *cosmos* has persuaded Sfameni Gasparro to refer to this specific reflective belief as a ‘cosmosophic vision’ of Orphic and Stoic inspiration. According to this philosophical and speculative vision, the contemplation of the *cosmos* represents the vehicle through which the philosopher/theologian reaches a higher knowledge of the divine, thus expressing a sort of ‘cosmic religion’.⁴⁹⁹ The main focus of the second part of the treatise is therefore strictly related to the description of god as both transcendent and involved in the life of the *cosmos* through the concept of divine power (θεϊά δύναμις).⁵⁰⁰ As Thom has pointed out:

god remains transcendent, separate from the world, in essence; his involvement in the cosmos is confined to his power. [...] the distinction between different divine principles (in *De mundo* between god’s essence and his power) serves to maintain god’s

⁴⁹⁷ Thom 2014: 14-15.

⁴⁹⁸ ‘Ζεὺς ἄρσιν γένετο, Ζεὺς ἄμβροτος ἔπλετο νύμφη’ (fr. 31 F (21-21a K.) ‘Zeus is a man, Zeus is an immortal maiden’ (Transl. Thom 2014: 55).

⁴⁹⁹ See Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 501.

⁵⁰⁰ On the concept of θεϊά δύναμις in *De mundo* see Radice 1995: 73-95.

transcendence, while at the same time explains how it is possible that he can be active in the world. There is however an important difference: *De mundo* is more strictly ‘monotheistic’ than the Platonic and Neopythagorean texts; in *De mundo* one single god, acting through his power, is the cause of everything that happens in the cosmos.⁵⁰¹

Although I tend not to agree with the use of the term ‘monotheistic’ to refer to what remains a polytheistic context, these very important remarks constitute an invaluable introduction to my analysis of the henotheistic/theopantistic divine figure of the Orphic Zeus, whose features of transcendence and immanence I will soon outline.

I would therefore now like to focus on the version of the hymn reported by Eusebius, which corresponds to the one contained in the *Rhapsodies*, the most recent Orphic theogony dated back to the late Hellenistic period.⁵⁰² After having described the sequence of events of the generations of the gods until the neutering of Chronos at the hands of Zeus,⁵⁰³ the poet narrates how Zeus devours Phanes to avoid losing his power, thus resulting in his containing all divine and mortal beings;⁵⁰⁴ it is here that the *Hymn to Zeus* comes into view.

First and foremost, it is worth noticing that in this text the poet stresses more than once the conception of how a god like Zeus, whose name is many times repeated mostly at the beginning, is described as encircling all things. Concerning the repetition of the god’s name, this *formula* may have had a liturgical purpose functioning as an oration or a liturgical and mystical poem, and this could also be confirmed by my description of the *Hymn to Zeus* as a mixture of more reflective and – on the other hand – more intuitive beliefs’ elements.

⁵⁰¹ Thom 2014: 114-115.

⁵⁰² For an introduction to the *Rhapsodies* see West 1983: 227-258; Bernabé 2004: 97-101; Verzura 2011: 313-315 and the related bibliography which can there be found.

⁵⁰³ See for example fr. 97 T (65 K.), 102 F (62 K.), 105 F (66 K.), 109 F (60+65+68 K.), 164 F (104 +105 K.), 193 F (101 K.); fr. 226 F (101 K.) -242 F (95 K.).

⁵⁰⁴ Fr. 241 F (167 K.).

The hymn opens with a definition of the god constituted by a series of apparently paradoxical statements, but that aims indeed to introduce an image of Zeus and of the *cosmos* in which the opposites harmonically coexist:⁵⁰⁵

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένετο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀργικέραυνος·
Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται·
Ζεὺς ἄρσιν γένετο, Ζεὺς ἄφθιτος ἔπλετο νύμφη·
Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος⁵⁰⁶.

Zeus was the first, Zeus last, the lightning's lord,
Zeus head, Zeus centre, all things are from Zeus.
Zeus born a male, Zeus virgin undefiled;
Zeus the firm base of earth and starry heaven.⁵⁰⁷

It has just been said that these paradoxical statements may be defined as apparent because, following Bianchi, I consider them as an example of the Orphic conception of the divinity. The line 'Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται' expresses a sort of completeness and roundedness that can be considered as both temporal and spatial, a conception which is here best represented by the image of the *macranthropos*,⁵⁰⁸ a concrete but also metaphorical 'cosmic man/divinity' in which the head (κεφαλή) is also the middle (μέσσα) and completion of the world. Indeed, Zeus appears as the tangible and metaphorical foundation of reality, thus being both transcendent and immanent according to what has been here defined as the Orphic 'cosmic god'. This god constitutes the root of all things but

⁵⁰⁵ Bernabé 2010a: 73.

⁵⁰⁶ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1-4.

⁵⁰⁷ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

⁵⁰⁸ "Ma vi è anche una totalità in senso spaziale, e per esprimerla interviene la [...] concezione del *macranthropos* ('grande uomo' o 'uomo cosmico'), con le sue corrispondenze anatomico-cosmologiche, sebbene nel nostro testo il termine *kephalè* indichi piuttosto l'inizio' che non 'la testa' in senso concreto, un inizio che è anche metà (μέσσα) e compimento [...]. In lui tutte le contrapposizioni si risolvono [...] e si uniscono in una prospettiva totale" (Bianchi 1975: 255).

at the same times transcends them without fully identifying with them as in ‘purely’ pantheistic conceptions.⁵⁰⁹

This image of the cosmic god has been associated by Bianchi with an Orphic religious conception known as ‘theopantism’, according to which the divinity is part of the world (constituting its base and divine root)⁵¹⁰ without fully identifying with it. This conception may be seen represented here in the *Hymn to Zeus* in vertical terms through the images of the head and body, even though this uprightness might be considered as also ‘rounded’ since the fact that Zeus appears to be the beginning and end of all things echoes an idea of completeness and roundedness which could be interpreted as both temporal and spatial. Indeed, the expression ‘ἔν δὲ δέμας βασίλειον, ἐν ᾧ τάδε πάντα κυκλεῖται’⁵¹¹ (‘One kingly form, encircling all things here’)⁵¹² seems to refer to a sort of ‘circular’ theopantism, in which the divine both absorbs and transcends reality so that this divine is able to encircle it, thus creating a sort of balance between transcendence and immanence. It is interesting to notice here that in reflective sources a henotheistic ‘syncretic’ tendency is sometimes shown through the narration of the absorption of both the universe and other gods by the one god (here Zeus) who thus encircles all beings and reality, even though not fully identifying with them. I would argue that the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, and most of all the narrative parts preceding it, seems to be one of these cases.

Mendoza, making reference to the episodes of the cosmogony contained in the Derveni Papyrus, claims to be able to identify a ‘personal monism’ focused on the centralisation of the creative power of Zeus, according to which:

at a culminating point of the cosmogonic process, Zeus appears as only god, and the only existing thing. The whole universe, which he would recreate himself further on, albeit

⁵⁰⁹ See also Bianchi 1970: 99.

⁵¹⁰ See Bianchi 1975: 257.

⁵¹¹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 7.

⁵¹² My translation.

in order, stemming from himself, is absorbed in him. Zeus is, therefore, an immanent divinity.⁵¹³

However, not all scholars agree in identifying this mainly syncretistic henotheistic tendency in Orphic reflective sources. Herrero for example, as we have seen before, believes it to be possible to trace a tendency to hierarchise the gods (up to the one supreme god) in the theogonic framework of philosophical and theological texts, and a syncretistic tendency in hymns (more intuitive sources).⁵¹⁴ In fact, as we have seen in the introductory chapter of this thesis,⁵¹⁵ the vertical and hierarchical tendency (in which the unique supreme divinity appears to be the result of a sort of ‘extraction’ of the one god from the many) finds evidence especially in philosophical speculation and contrasts with a ‘centripetal’ tendency, evidence for which is found mainly in cultic and eulogistic manifestations, that drives the cult to focus on one divine figure which temporarily absorbs names, characteristics and roles normally belonging to other divine entities. However, Herrero also admits that the *Hymn to Zeus* happens to be a remarkable ‘exception’ to this tendency of finding ‘syncretistic’ henotheism in intuitive liturgical sources and hierarchical henotheism in reflective theogonic sources: he points out that this could be seen as a case in which the two henotheistic tendencies seem to be combined. Indeed, here the mythological episode of the absorption of the entire universe by Zeus narrated in the theogonies “is transformed in the hands of the Orphic poet into the justification for the absolute centrality of a single god, Zeus, to whom the theogony at this point dedicates a hymn”.⁵¹⁶

It is therefore interesting to briefly examine Herrero’s observations as I tend to agree with his position, in order to cast light on the complex structure and context of this Orphic

⁵¹³ Mendoza 2011: 31.

⁵¹⁴ Herrero 2010a: 318.

⁵¹⁵ See §1.2.

⁵¹⁶ Herrero 2010a: 318.

hymn. He analyses the hymn not only in his work *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, but most of all in his article *Orphic God(s): Theogonies and Hymns as Vehicles of Monotheism*.⁵¹⁷

Herrero first places the hymn in a chapter dedicated to those Orphic texts that present strong henotheistic features,⁵¹⁸ embracing the supposition previously made by West that the author of the version of the *Rhapsodies* “has evidently interpolated into the theogony a passage of separate provenance, probably from a hymn and presumably current under the name of Orpheus. It assumes an anthropomorphic Zeus with golden locks, horns and wings: this is not the Zeus of the theogonies, but the Zeus of some Hellenistic syncretism”.⁵¹⁹

Bearing in mind these observations, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the author of the *Rhapsodies* has inserted a hymn -characterised by peculiar features related to its genre and to the intuitive character of the source- into the wider theogonic structure of the poem. At line 7 of the *De mundo* version, for example, we see that the focus is on the kingly figure of Zeus seen as ἀρχός:

Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυνος.⁵²⁰

Zeus is king, Zeus is ruler of all, ruler of the thunderbolt.⁵²¹

The same line in the *Rhapsodies*’ version, however, sounds different:

Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος.⁵²²

Zeus is king, Zeus alone first cause of all.⁵²³

We may notice here that the rhapsodist changed the expression ‘ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυνος’ to ‘αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος’: this appears to be an attempt to focus not

⁵¹⁷ Herrero 2010b.

⁵¹⁸ Herrero 2010a: 187-190.

⁵¹⁹ West 1983: 240.

⁵²⁰ Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 7.

⁵²¹ Transl. Thom 2014: 55.

⁵²² Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 5.

⁵²³ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

only on the figure of the one god as ruler but of the god as the one who absorbs and (re) creates the whole universe. Indeed, as Herrero has pointed out, “if we concede to the compiler some interest in maintaining a certain theological consistency, it is easily perceivable that αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος underlines that Zeus gives birth to all things himself, precisely the theogonic episode into which this hymn is inserted”.⁵²⁴ The idea of supreme power is not, of course, lost in the theogonic version of the hymn⁵²⁵ but seems to be obscured by the willingness to underline the link with the previous episodes of the *Rhapsodies* in which the swallowing of the universe by Zeus is narrated. This version appears to me, indeed, an attempt by the rhapsodist to conciliate the spirit of the hymn -which seems to be still linked to the genre of performed ritual hymns- with the more general theogonic context.

In his article *Orphic god(s)* Herrero continues his analysis of the two different possible ways of expressing a henotheistic tendency, that is the hierarchic and syncretistic ones, respectively conveyed by two different literary genres, theogonies and hymns. Even though I do not agree with the ‘informal’ use of the term monotheism to refer to these two tendencies inserted in a polytheistic structure and context,⁵²⁶ it is interesting to notice how he links the use of specific literary forms with the willingness to express henotheistic beliefs:

many Orphic poets, much though their beliefs and interests may have differed, profited from the internal mechanisms of the genres attributed to Orpheus (theological hexametrical poetry, i.e. theogonies and hymns) to proclaim the unity of the divine. These mechanisms were already created in Classical times by early Orphic poets, whose speculation runs parallel to the monism of Milesian philosophers and other thinkers like Xenophanes or Parmenides. Contrary to other pre-Socratics, Orphic theologians

⁵²⁴ Herrero 2010a: 189 n.105. See also West 1983: 240-241.

⁵²⁵ See fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 5-7.

⁵²⁶ “In ancient Greece there are two literary genres, theogony and hymn, which are particularly suitable to expressing monotheism in each of the two ways while keeping within the traditional polytheistic framework of Greek poetry” (Herrero 2010b: 77).

preferred to stick to traditional poetic forms and use them to express their monist views [...].⁵²⁷

To conclude, I am inclined to embrace these remarks made by West and Herrero, since the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* appears to be a unique case in which a text shows features of intuitive beliefs (traces of the hymnodic ritual genre) while mostly remaining a reflective source, that is a theogony composed by authors whose scope was probably to narrate and convey a religious view in a high degree of awareness and speculation. As a matter of fact, the fragment appears to be a complex and thought-through hymn set in a cosmogonic and theogonic reflective context, thus presenting features of both types of texts. This appears to be related not only to a matter of genre but also to a matter of belief, here closely interconnected. Despite the focus on one god (here Zeus) the Orphic theopantistic conception remains a henotheistic manifestation of a polytheistic religious attitude, in which the multiplicity of the gods is never called in question but rather brought back to the original unity of Zeus, centre of the *cosmos* (in spatial terms) and of history (in temporal and chronological terms), in which knowledge and power merge together.⁵²⁸

According to Finkelberg's work, the Orphic theogonies seem to keep the main focus on the *macrocosmos*, that is to say on the relation between the One and the Many on a wide scale, focusing on the 'creation' of the world and on divine genealogies.⁵²⁹ The scholar, who concentrates on the text of the Derveni papyrus and of the *Rhapsodies*, argues that the Orphic focal point in these sources, which we may call reflective, is both diachronic (Zeus re-originates the universe and the other gods) and synchronic (in swallowing and creating the universe he partly identifies with it). What emerges from this text is, therefore, an aspect of Orphic belief that I would define as henotheistic (or theopantistic), in which the figure of the

⁵²⁷ Herrero 2010b: 78.

⁵²⁸ Bernabé 2010a: 74.

⁵²⁹ Finkelberg 1986: 325. On the *macrocosmos-microcosmos* opposition see also Guthrie 1950: 316-317.

one god is represented through images in what appears to be a hymn (a sort of fictional intuitive context) encapsulated in a theogony. This god presents, furthermore, features that characterise him in relation with the other gods and with the universe, in both a syncretistic and hierarchic way, both in synchronic and diachronic terms.⁵³⁰

The analysis of some focal words and terminology is also important in order to throw light on the complex figure of the Orphic henotheistic divinity which is here represented. Firstly, it is possible to notice that the verb τεύχω ('Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται',⁵³¹ 'Zeus head, Zeus centre, all things are from Zeus'⁵³²) is used to describe the 'creative' act of Zeus, a very specific term which usually refers to the activity of an artist or artisan. The world described in the *Hymn to Zeus* thus appears to be conceived as an act of concrete 'creation', orderly and intelligent, a structured piece of art in which Zeus is the artisan from the beginning of time and that is meant to stay forever.⁵³³

The hymn proceeds with the description of the powerful supremacy of Zeus, as well as with his being independent and self-sufficient (αὐτός):⁵³⁴

Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος.
ἐν κράτος, εἷς δαίμων, γενέτης μέγας ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων,
ἐν δὲ δέμας βασίλειον, ἐν ᾧ τάδε πάντα κυκλεῖται.⁵³⁵

Zeus sovereign, Zeus alone first cause of all:
one power divine, great ruler of the world,
one kingly form, encircling all things here.⁵³⁶

The first thing to note in this passage is a concept that the author of this fragment (and of the *Rhapsodies* in general) seems to have at heart, that is the image of Zeus being ἀρχή and

⁵³⁰ Herrero 2010b: 90.

⁵³¹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 2.

⁵³² Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

⁵³³ Bernabé 2010a: 73-75.

⁵³⁴ See Bernabé 2010a: 94.

⁵³⁵ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 5-7.

⁵³⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

ἀρχός, both origin (first) and ruler.⁵³⁷ Indeed Zeus, as Bernabé points out,⁵³⁸ holds the supremacy and origin of the γένος after having defeated and given new birth to the previous generations of gods, thus giving a new start to the theogonic and cosmogonic history.⁵³⁹ What Bernabé appears to be pointing out here is, therefore, not only the importance of the relationship between Zeus and the *cosmos*⁵⁴⁰ but also, even though more allusively, the relationship between the one god and the plurality of the other gods.⁵⁴¹

A strong link with the theogony of the Derveni Papyrus seems to emerge mostly from the first three versions of the hymn, this theogony being about the creation of the world and of other gods by the hands of Zeus, and about how the god gained control of all divine and Olympian powers.⁵⁴² As we have seen, Alderink also comments on these peculiar divine features, defining this cosmogonic and cosmologic framework as ‘monistic’ and pointing out that

The relationship between Zeus and the world is one of continuity. On the other hand, there is a strong dissimilarity between Zeus and the world, since Zeus is the *archòs* of the world, both in the sense of origin and in the sense of governing what he has created.⁵⁴³

All these features seem to characterise and well describe what has been defined as theopantism or, in other words, a general Orphic henotheism: the power and strength of the one god Zeus not only determine his supremacy but also identify with the body of the universe. Zeus appears to be supreme not only because he is superior and separate (certainly transcendence is one of his features, but not the only one as in the monotheistic

⁵³⁷ Bernabé 2010a: 75-76. On the complex concepts of ἀρχή (and ἀρχή in Orphic sources) I would like to quote here, among others, Bernabé 2011a and 2011b: 57-58 together with the bibliography that can there be found.

⁵³⁸ Bernabé 2010a: 72.

⁵³⁹ See also Bernabé 2007b: 103-104.

⁵⁴⁰ On the contrary, this relationship was at the centre of Bianchi's research in Bianchi 1970 and 1975: 253-260.

⁵⁴¹ See Bernabé's comments on the theogony of the Derveni Papyrus with regard to the *Hymn to Zeus* in Bernabé 2010a: 72-76, along with the bibliography which is there cited.

⁵⁴² Bernabé 2010a: 70.

⁵⁴³ Alderink 1981: 35-36. See §1.5.

conception)⁵⁴⁴ but also because he is the leader of the universe and part of that universe as well.⁵⁴⁵

The author of the hymn then proceeds to describe the parts of Zeus' body according to the image, as we have previously seen, of the *macranthropos*⁵⁴⁶ which corresponds to the three parts in which the universe is structured: the head, that is the heaven,⁵⁴⁷ the body, corresponding to the earth,⁵⁴⁸ and the base, which could be linked with the Underworld.⁵⁴⁹ It is thus evident here that what is at the heart of the rhapsodist's interest is not just the figure of Zeus as cosmological principle, as in the version of the Derveni Papyrus. Here, instead, the focus of the reflection is on the complex relationship between the god, the universe and the other divine beings, his immanence and at the same time transcendence.

Martin West analyses in his book *The Orphic Poems* the modalities and reasons why the author of the *Rhapsodies* may have expanded the 'original' version of the hymn adding this passage of about 25 lines describing the divine body of Zeus.⁵⁵⁰ In examining the images provided by the rhapsodist, West observes how the general picture of the universe described by this version of the hymn (with heaven/οὐρανός and aither/αἰθήρ at the top, air/ἄήρ lower and beneath them the earth and underworld) happens to be in contrast with the one that it is possible to read in another Orphic theogony, the Hieronyman one.⁵⁵¹ In fact here the earth is represented as created by Phanes as a sphere, floating in space and expressly

⁵⁴⁴ As we will see in the *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus*: see for example fr. 377 F (245 K.), 17-18; 378 F (247 K.), 29-30, 39.

⁵⁴⁵ Bernabé 2010a: 84-85.

⁵⁴⁶ See Bianchi 1970: 99 and 1975: 255. Zeus is also defined as 'cosmic man' in Bianchi 1975: 257.

⁵⁴⁷ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 12-22.

⁵⁴⁸ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 23-28.

⁵⁴⁹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 29-30.

⁵⁵⁰ West 1983: 239-241.

⁵⁵¹ On the *Hieronyman Theogony*, cited by Damascius as one of the Orphic accounts on the beginning of the world and generally dated back to the 3rd century BCE, see West 1983: 176-226; Bernabé 2004: 80-82 and the ample bibliography which can there be found.

shaped for the use of mankind.⁵⁵² On the contrary, the image that we find in the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*, set in the Rhapsodic Theogony, finds various correspondences in other sources dated from the 5th century BCE onwards,⁵⁵³ such as the *Orphic hymn* to Hephaistos.⁵⁵⁴

We may notice how all these observations we have so far made about the Rhapsodic version of the hymn witness how the text, which appears to share some features of the more intuitive hymnodic sources, presents a general conscious alteration which we may refer to a context of reflective belief. In fact, the apparent willingness of the rhapsodist to consciously reflect on the figure and creative supreme power of Zeus, shown for example by the addition of the 25 descriptive lines of the divine body of Zeus, demonstrates a high degree of awareness and reflection which can be found only in theogonies, cosmogonies and philosophical speculations. This is evident in the complex and thought-through description of the divine figure of Zeus, which is here characterised by various and differentiated features related to both syncretistic and hierarchical henotheistic tendencies as we have previously analysed. The general image of the one god is therefore in line with the theopantistic features that we have listed before and that have been observed by Bianchi and Bernabé. The god is here described as part of the universe but not fully identified with it, first as ruler and creator, head, centre and end of everything, in a reflective description of the divine status of the god which appears to correspond to an awareness shared by the author of the theogony and possibly by the readers of the *Rhapsodies* close to the context of its composition.

The last passage I would like to focus on is the representation of the *voûç* of the god:

⁵⁵² West 1983: 210.

⁵⁵³ See West 1983: 240 n.25. West also believes it is possible to find the image of the different parts of the body of the god as related to different parts of the universe (sky, sun, moon, earth...) as a well-established literary image in Indian literature and in Iran and Mesopotamia (see West 1983: 240).

⁵⁵⁴ *Orph. Hymn.* 66, 1-7.

νοῦς δέ οἱ ἀψευδὴς βασιλῆιος ἄφθιτος αἰθήρ,
ὧι δὴ πάντα κλύει καὶ φράζεται· οὐδέ τις ἔστιν
αὐδὴ οὐδ' ἐνοπὴ οὐδὲ κτύπος οὐδέ μὲν ὄσσα,
ἣ λήθει Διὸς οὔας ὑπερμενέος Κρονίωνος·
ὧδε μὲν ἀθανάτην κεφαλὴν ἔχει ἡδὲ νόημα.⁵⁵⁵

his mind immortal ether, sovereign truth,
hears and considers all; nor any speech,
nor cry, nor noise, nor ominous voice escapes
the ear of Zeus, great Kronos' mightier son:
such his immortal head, and such his thought.⁵⁵⁶

It is in the head of Zeus that resides his intellect, here identified with the immortal ether, origin and orderly fundament of all *cosmos*.⁵⁵⁷ It is therefore interesting to notice how here the νοῦς is part of the divine body of Zeus, and thus of the *cosmos*. The one god is, indeed, “el principio, el fin y el centro del mundo, del que es además artesano divino y gobernante, principio material e inteligente, y controla el destino de todas las cosas”.⁵⁵⁸

3.2 Fr. 416 (298 K.)

ἔστιν δὴ πάντων ἀρχὴ Ζεύς. ζῆν γὰρ ἔδωκε
ζῶια τ' ἐγέννησεν καὶ Ζῆν' αὐτὸν καλέουσι
καὶ Δία τῆιδ', ὅτι δὴ διὰ τοῦτον ἅπαντα τέτυκται.
εἷς δὲ πατήρ οὗτος πάντων θνητῶν τε θεῶν τε.⁵⁵⁹

Zeus is the origin of all things. Indeed, he donated life
and generated living beings and they call him *Zēna*
and *Dia* because of that, since because of that all things were generated.
This is the one father of all mortals and gods.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁵ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 17-21.

⁵⁵⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

⁵⁵⁷ Such a concept is also found in Stoic sources such as SVF 2. 580, 642, 1061, 1067, 1077.

⁵⁵⁸ Bernabé 2010a: 76.

⁵⁵⁹ Fr. 416 (298 K.).

⁵⁶⁰ My translation.

This fragment belongs to the lost Orphic work Μικρότερος Κρατήρ (Shorter Krater) and is cited only⁵⁶¹ by Johannes Diaconus Galenus' *Allegoriae in Hesiodi Theogoniam*.⁵⁶² The identity of this Byzantine scholar is still uncertain,⁵⁶³ although he is considered a popular allegorist of Hesiod generally dated no earlier than the 9th or 10th century CE (probably around the 11th).⁵⁶⁴ The work represents an attempt to provide different examples of allegorical readings of various authors with passages taken not only from Homer but also, as the title itself states, from Hesiod and others.⁵⁶⁵ Orphic poems seem to have been an interesting source of material for the scholar, since he introduces the fragment we are now analysing writing that:

ὁ Ζεύς τοῦ Διὸς κλίνεται, δηλουμένου πάντως ἡμῖν, ὡς οὗτός τε ζωὴ ἐστι, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ
ζῶσι τὰ ζῶντα, καὶ τὰ ὄντα ἀπλῶς δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ εἶναι εἴληχεν· ἄκουε γὰρ τοῦ Ὀρφέως ἐν
τῷ λεγομένῳ κρατῆρι τάδε σοι λέγοντος [...].⁵⁶⁶

Zeus is declined 'of Zeus' (Διός), showing himself entirely to us, since he is life, and through him live the living creatures, and (all) beings have received existence simply through him; indeed, listen to Orpheus who, in the so called Krater, says to you these things: [...].⁵⁶⁷

The first aspect which I would like to highlight is the appearance of the definition of Zeus as ἀρχή, a recurrent feature in Orphic henotheistic sources which we have already encountered in the *Hymn to Zeus*.⁵⁶⁸ Zeus as origin, first and creator is indeed at the centre of this fragment since he holds the supremacy and origins of the entire universe in a vertical

⁵⁶¹ "hoc opus testatur solus Ioann. Diacon." (Bernabé 2004: 341).

⁵⁶² The two main editions of this allegorical commentary on Hesiod's *Theogony* are those belonging to the editions of Hesiod's *scholia* edited by Gaisford (Gaisford 1823: 544-608) and Flach (Flach 1876: 295-365). For an introduction to the *scholia* on Hesiod see Flach 1876: 1-179.

⁵⁶³ Krumbacher (Krumbacher 1897: 557-558) briefly tries to outline the identity of this writer, differentiating him from another Johannes Pediasimos, a scholar and deacon of the 13th-14th century CE. On Johannes Diaconus Galenus see also Flach 1876: 145-154.

⁵⁶⁴ West 1983: 262.

⁵⁶⁵ Concerning different types of allegory, the scholar indicates Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus and Pronapis, defined as 'Homer's teacher' (Iohan. Diac. Gal. *Ad Hesiod. Theogon.* 498 = Gaisford 608, Flach 365).

⁵⁶⁶ Iohan. Diac. Gal. *Ad Hesiod. Theogon.* 482 (Gaisford 588, 24; Flach 343).

⁵⁶⁷ My translation.

⁵⁶⁸ Fr. 688a F, 1. See Zeus as ἀρχὸς in fr. 14 F, 4; 31 F (21-21a K.), 7.

perspective.⁵⁶⁹ The second aspect, which is however related to the first one, is that Zeus is here represented as vivifying giver of life and creator. All things are generated and created by him as the term τέτυκται states. This is indeed a special terminology which often appears in Orphic henotheistic contexts and we had also found it in the *Hymn to Zeus*, where it is possible to read the verse ‘Διὸς δ’ ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται’ (from Zeus all things are made).⁵⁷⁰ As we have previously analysed, the verb τεύχω is here utilised to describe the ‘creative’ act of Zeus, usually referring to the activity of an artist or artisan.⁵⁷¹ The fragment we are now analysing, however, goes one step forward and includes one other aspect in describing the act of creation by the hands of the god. Here Zeus is not only an orderly artisan but also (or maybe, most of all) a father, ‘πατήρ’, who generates all beings. The verb used is, indeed, ἐγέννησεν, ‘generated’. The vivifying power and generative role of Zeus is therefore one of the main features of the henotheistic god of this fragment, as it is possible to notice from the terms ζῆν and ζῶια, the link established between his role and his name, and the use of verbs related to the act of birth and creation.

What seems to be stressed in the passage is the relationship between Zeus and men on the one hand, and Zeus and the gods on the other. The author of this fragment thus appears to be interested not only in the particular relationship of the ‘one’ Orphic god with the universe but also in the relationship between this one god and the plurality of gods typical of the polytheistic structure. This is something I anticipated in the introductory chapter on Orphic theopantism and it is possible to see here an example of what we have discussed before.⁵⁷² Indeed, while the first lines of the fragment concentrate on the relationship between the one god and the universe (ἔστιν δὴ πάντων ἀρχὴ Ζεὺς [...] ζῶια τ’ ἐγέννησεν [...])

⁵⁶⁹ On ἀρχή in Orphic sources I would like to remind here, among others, Bernabé 2011a and 2011b: 57-58 and the bibliography that could there be found.

⁵⁷⁰ See fr. 14 F, 2; 31 F (21-21a K.), 2; 243 F (69+168 K.), 2.

⁵⁷¹ Jourdan talks about the “notion, caractéristique de la cosmogonie ancienne attribuée à Orphée (Payrus de Derveni, col. XVII, l. 12), de fabrication du monde” (Jourdan 2010a: 196).

⁵⁷² See §1.5.

διὰ τοῦτον ἅπαντα τέτυκται'),⁵⁷³ the last verse seems to convey a slightly differentiated henotheistic view. The focus is on the fatherhood of Zeus to mortals and gods thus creating a sort of hierarchic picture.⁵⁷⁴

Otto Kern argues a link between this fragment and the Stoic doctrine: 'Stoicorum doctrina aperta'.⁵⁷⁵ On the relation between this Orphic fragment and the Stoics Lobeck also commented that "quam interpretationem sive Orpheus a Chrysippo mutuatus est [...] sive Stoicorum princeps Orpheo suo abstulit, neutri invidemus".⁵⁷⁶ As a matter of fact, a fragment of the Greek philosopher Chrysippus, who wrote a treatise *On the Gods* and one *On Zeus*, appears to recall certain aspects of our fragment.⁵⁷⁷

The fragments related to the nature of the gods⁵⁷⁸ are indeed relevant to this research since they convey an image of a one god⁵⁷⁹ which shares a few features and terms with the Zeus we are now analysing. Along with the fragment from Stobaeus cited by Kern I will soon analyse, Chrysippus is quoted in the 7th book of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*,⁵⁸⁰ when the author is presenting the Stoic doctrine on the *cosmos*, the gods and nature.⁵⁸¹ Diogenes, while talking about the divine in Stoic philosophy and the etymology of the name of Zeus, reports that they regarded him as father of all beings, demiurge and vivifying divine figure (item 24a in the Appendix).⁵⁸² The Stoic divine figure pictured in this

⁵⁷³ See Bianchi 1970.

⁵⁷⁴ See Bernabé 2009: 58-61, as well as the bibliography cited in those pages.

⁵⁷⁵ Kern 1922: 311. On Stoic doctrine see, as an introduction, Von Arnim 1903 and 1905; Radice 2002; Inwood 2003 (for a recent overview); Inwood-Gerson 2008.

⁵⁷⁶ Lobeck 1829: 735-6.

⁵⁷⁷ His fragmentary work is divided by Von Arnim (Von Arnim 1903) into different parts such as logic, dialectic, physics, natural phenomena, plants and animals, the human soul, (divine) fate and the nature of the gods (SVF 2.45-1105). The collection continues with topics such as divination, divine providence, virtues and passions.

⁵⁷⁸ Von Arnim entitles this section 'de natura deorum'; see Von Arnim 1903: 299.

⁵⁷⁹ 'Qualis sit deus' (Von Arnim 1903: 305).

⁵⁸⁰ See Reale 2005: vii-cxxxiii, Dorandi 2013 and Miller 2018.

⁵⁸¹ Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 7.132-160. We may note that in a passage of the *Lives* Diogenes harshly criticizes Orpheus defining him a theologian and not a philosopher (Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 1.5).

⁵⁸² SVF 2.1021 = Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 7.147.

passage from the *Lives* is represented as a rational being, a (‘δημιουργόν’), creator of the universe and, most of all, father of all things (‘πατέρα πάντων’). The text provides the reader with an etymology of the name Zeus which closely recalls the one we have previously encountered, where the name is strictly related to the fact that he is the vivifying (‘Ζῆνα δὲ καλοῦσι παρ’ ὅσον τοῦ ζῆν αἰτιός ἐστιν ἢ διὰ τοῦ ζῆν κεχώρηκεν’) all-pervading giver of life and creator of the universe (‘Δία μὲν γάρ φασι δι’ ὃν τὰ πάντα’).

Stoic theology appears as a complex and mixture of pantheism, monism and polytheism, regarded as part of physics and focusing on the overall coherence of cosmic processes, teleology and providential design (thus often adopting a cosmological and teleological perspective).⁵⁸³ The object of this theology is therefore the governing principle of the *cosmos*, the existence and nature of the divine, fate and providence, and our attitude towards the god(s).⁵⁸⁴ Henotheism has also been mentioned regarding philosophical views of the gods of Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus.⁵⁸⁵

In the passage I have just mentioned, the god is said to be known under many names depending on different roles and powers (‘ὁ πολλαῖς προσηγορίαις προσονομάζεται κατὰ τὰς δυνάμεις [...] ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας προσηγορίας ἐχόμενοί τινος οἰκειότητος ἀπέδοσαν’): he is Athena when related to the ether, Hera when to the air, Hephaistos to the fire, Poseidon to the sea and Demeter the earth. We know that Chrysippus is said to have talked about a number of unknown gods but also to have called the world itself a god (all-pervading world-soul), identifying the world with a (one) god which operates in the intellect and reason.⁵⁸⁶ The conception of a single god could thus take different forms in Chrysippus:⁵⁸⁷ the source

⁵⁸³ Algra 2003: 165.

⁵⁸⁴ On Stoic theology see among others the contributions of Sedley and Frede in Frede-Laks 2002 (41-118), Algra 2003 and Salles 2009.

⁵⁸⁵ Algra 2003: 165 n.33.

⁵⁸⁶ Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.39; Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 7.148. See Algra 2003: 165-167.

⁵⁸⁷ Chrysippus’ theology is also discussed by Frede with regard to pagan monotheism, concluding that “only Zeus satisfies the criterion for being a god fully” (Frede 1999: 52).

we have just analysed can be seen as an example of a syncretic henotheistic view, in which the one supreme god (here Zeus) incorporates names, attributes and roles of other divine figures whose existence is, nonetheless, never called in question.

One feature which this Stoic fragment shares with our Orphic ones is therefore the emphasis placed on the fact that Zeus pervades the entire universe (‘κοινῶς τε καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ διήκον διὰ πάντων’) and appears to be identified with the whole *cosmos*. Zeus as part of the *cosmos* is, as we have seen, close to the Orphic theopantistic view of the one god partly identified with the universe, even though in our Orphic sources the divinity never fully corresponds with the world (in a mere pantheistic view) but always somehow transcends it.

The other Stoic fragment, once again from Chrysippus, that appears to be related to our Orphic henotheistic source is taken from Stobaeus’ *Eclogae*,⁵⁸⁸ as Kern has argued.⁵⁸⁹ Here Stobaeus reports a fragment of Chrysippus in which the philosopher presents the etymology of the name Zeus linked with his vivifying role as cause and origin of everything:

Χρυσίππου. Ζεὺς μὲν οὖν φαίνεται ὠνομάσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πᾶσι δεδωκέναι τὸ ζῆν. Δία δὲ αὐτὸν λέγουσιν, ὅτι πάντων ἐστὶν αἴτιος καὶ δι' αὐτὸν πάντα.⁵⁹⁰

From Chrysippus. Zeus therefore appears to be called this way for having donated life to all things. They also call him Δία, since he is the cause of everything, and all things are through him.⁵⁹¹

As we can see from this passage, Chrysippus seems to underline the vivifying power of Zeus who from his name is directly linked with the term τὸ ζῆν as in Orphic fragment 416 F. Another aspect the two fragments have in common is that they also relate the other form of the name of Zeus, Δία, to the fact that he created and pervades all things in the universe.

⁵⁸⁸ For an introduction to the life and work of Stobaeus see Mansfeld-Runia 1997 and Reydam-Schils 2011.

⁵⁸⁹ Kern 1922: 311.

⁵⁹⁰ SVF 2.1062 = Stob. *Ecl.* 1.26.

⁵⁹¹ My translation.

Though we must be careful in defining this relationship between the two texts as being as clear as Kern suggests, a certain echo between these two reflective sources is undeniable and they both seem to share a similar henotheistic view of the one god Zeus, allowing for philosophical influences and cross-contamination at least in the Hellenistic period.

The figure of Zeus as the one vivifying god who donates life to all beings is found also in Plato's *Cratylus* in its discussion of language, names and etymologies.⁵⁹² In a passage concerning the correctness of names the author cites Homeric examples such as Agamemnon,⁵⁹³ mythological figures such as Tantalus,⁵⁹⁴ and divine figures such as Zeus, Homeric gods⁵⁹⁵ and 'natural' gods.⁵⁹⁶ Here, the author establishes the equivalence between ὄνομα and λόγος ('ἐστὶν οἶον λόγος τὸ τοῦ Διὸς ὄνομα') since the name of the god appears to include a definition and a sort of 'descriptive function'. The text can be found in the Appendix, item 24b.⁵⁹⁷

Zeus is described by Plato as 'αἴτιος ... τοῦ ζῆν', the cause of life, and, most of all, 'ὁ ἄρχων τε καὶ βασιλεὺς τῶν πάντων', in henotheistic terms as 'ruler and king of all things'. Though it is not possible to state to what extent Plato is aware of the terms he is using to describe the god, it is still remarkable to notice how he uses a terminology close to the henotheistic one that we have encountered in the Orphic fragment and in the *Hymn to Zeus*. It is notable that Zeus is represented as ἀρχός, beginning and ruler of all things, and king. The emphasis that is placed on the vivifying role of the god, which is represented as giver of life, recalls the Orphic fragment we are here analysing, and Plato also decides to underline the fundamental feature of Zeus as νοῦς ('μεγάλης τινὸς διανοίας ... τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ').

⁵⁹² For an introduction to Plato's *Cratylus* see, among others, Reeve 1998: xi-liii; Sedley 2003; Casertano 2005; Ademollo 2011.

⁵⁹³ Pl. *Cra.* 395a-b.

⁵⁹⁴ Pl. *Cra.* 395d-e.

⁵⁹⁵ Pl. *Cra.* 400d-408d.

⁵⁹⁶ Pl. *Cra.* 408d-410e.

⁵⁹⁷ Pl. *Cra.* 396a-b. See Casertano 2005: 161.

This is another characteristic that we often see in Orphic henotheistic sources,⁵⁹⁸ especially in reflective ones. In fact, the role of the *voũς* seems to raise interest particularly in philosophers and theogonic poets' speculations and is often linked with a reflection on the god's transcendence. Such a reflection requires a high degree of commitment and awareness; I am here not directly ascribing such an attitude to this specific Platonic passage, especially considering the nature of the *Cratylus* and Plato's own 'fluid' position in this dialogue. However, as David Sedley points out:

As for Zeus, he now combines being the offspring of 'pure intellect' with being himself the cause of all life. This closely prefigures another central theme of the *Timaeus*. The teleological structure of the world is there the handiwork of a cosmic intellect or intelligence (*nous*), the creator of the astral divinities which in turn create all mortal life forms.⁵⁹⁹

As I have anticipated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there are other philosophical observations made by Plato and found, for example, in the *Timaeus*,⁶⁰⁰ which may be considered the sign of a certain awareness of theological issues and that recalls the reflective beliefs we have mentioned before. Those theological and cosmological considerations seem to be characterised by a metarepresentational activity, of which we also get a glimpse in the passage of the *Cratylus* (although possibly in a more subtle way). It is thus clear that we cannot here define Plato's position as consciously henotheistic: in fact, there is no reference to the relationship with other divine entities, let alone a hierarchical one. However, certain terminologies and the stress on specific concepts (Zeus as ἀρχός, giver

⁵⁹⁸ Compare the representation of the *voũς* of the god in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* (fr. 243 F [69+168 K.], 17-21), for which see §3.1.

⁵⁹⁹ Sedley 2003: 91.

⁶⁰⁰ Pl. *Ti.* 41a-b; 53b-c. See §1.4.

of life, νοῦς) also appear to recall a henotheistic framework and background in which the supreme god is described with specific features.⁶⁰¹

The passage of Plato's *Cratylus* is also analysed by Proclus, the 5th century Neoplatonic philosopher head of the Platonic school in Athens, in his commentary *On Plato's Cratylus*.⁶⁰² This commentary is particularly relevant for the aim of this research since it encapsulates the two most important features not only of the Platonic text we have just analysed, but also of the Orphic fragment 416 F we are now examining. Proclus' work represents another reflective source in which a speculation is made on the nature of the god starting from some considerations on the god's names and attributes. The theological system, characterised by a high level of awareness by both Plato and Proclus, thus relates to the reflection on the study of names and terminologies, presenting similarities with the features of the Orphic fragment on Zeus we are now taking into consideration.

Proclus dedicates ten sections to the analysis of the etymology of the name Zeus, describing the god as Demiurge⁶⁰³ and quoting from Orpheus, Homer and Plato.⁶⁰⁴ In one passage the author defines Zeus in Orphic henotheistic terms as both immanent and transcendent creator of the universe and all the other gods, and proceeds with the actual analysis of the etymology of the name Zeus, quoting directly the passage from the *Cratylus* we have previously analysed (Appendix item 24c).⁶⁰⁵ What I would like to stress here is the

⁶⁰¹ As Ademollo has observed, in fact, "some etymologies appear to encapsulate views which we have reason to consider genuinely Platonic" (Ademollo 2011: 191).

⁶⁰² For an introduction to the author, the Neoplatonic school at Athens and the commentary on Plato's *Cratylus* see Siorvanes 1996; Edwards 2000b: xlv-l; Sheppard 2000: 837-840; Tarrant 2007: 1-7, 173-191; van den Berg 2008 (especially pp. 135-197 on divine names and the theological function of etymology).

⁶⁰³ Procl. *In Cra.* 99.

⁶⁰⁴ Procl. *In Cra.* 95-105. Marinus, the successor to Proclus at the school in Athens, wrote a biography of the philosopher in which we are told about the relationship between Proclus and the Orphic literary corpus and ritual. Although Proclus never wrote a commentary on the Orphic poems, he is said to have been a keen reader of Orphic mythological and theological works and to have performed Orphic purification rites. See Marinus, *Life of Proclus* ch. 26-27. On Marinus and this passage see Edwards 2000b: l-lv and 96-99.

⁶⁰⁵ Procl. *In Cra.* 99 and 101.

speculation made by both Plato and Proclus on some terms and concepts which present many analogies with our Orphic henotheistic fragment, these concepts being again the name of Zeus as mark of his role of first creator (ἀρχή) and donor of life to all beings. What Proclus highlights is the double role of the supreme god as paternal figure (father to all beings and gods, as the Orphic fragment states)⁶⁰⁶ and all-embodying vivifying ‘maternal’ figure in what I would define as ‘henotheistic’ terms. Proclus’ philosophical exegesis is here applied to the name of the god Zeus: its etymology thus represents a source of wisdom about the god at issue and contains valuable elements for the construction of a Platonic theology.⁶⁰⁷

To conclude this section on the relationship and mutual influence between the Orphic fragment and the philosophical sources I have taken into consideration, I would like to start by reminding that the relationship between Plato and Orphism is complex. References to Orpheus are often negative (his poetry is described as a deceptive illusion, almost not divine and close to the sophists), while references to *ta Orphika* and *Orphic Hymns* (according to Bernabé this is not a generic term but probably actual hymns circulating at the time), often show a certain contempt towards some of the Orphic books.⁶⁰⁸ However, Plato often invites us to scorn the deceitful books and see beyond the surface, thus unveiling the hidden meaning of the Orphic texts. When it comes to Orphism (and not Orpheus or the Orphic worshippers/charlatans), cosmogonic and theogonic myths can be found in Plato but he does not appear to be very much interested in them. What he is interested in is -on the contrary- the Orphic conception of the soul and its immortality, the *soma/sema* opposition and certain aspects of specific deities.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ Fr. 416 F. (298 K.), 4.

⁶⁰⁷ For an introduction to Proclus’ methods of philosophical exegesis also as applied to Homer, the *Chaldean Oracles* and the Orphic poems see Sheppard 2014, especially pp. 73-74 on the exegesis of divine names and theurgic rites. On the theological function of the etymology of the name of Zeus see van den Berg 2008: 180-184.

⁶⁰⁸ Bernabé 2011b.

⁶⁰⁹ See Guthrie 1935: 238-244; Bernabé 2011a and 2011b; Casadesús Bordoy 2008.

I am here arguing that Plato is interested -in the passage I quoted- in the unity and absolute power of Zeus as in these henotheistic terms the divinity is described as strong and imposing its cosmic order, an order that all men must follow. This is also linked in other passages with topics such as morality, the destiny of the soul after death and the ideal city.⁶¹⁰ The literary ability and philosophical power of Plato -in line with his usual attitude towards other sources/philosophers- allowed him indeed to keep at the right distance or on the contrary absorb (often without explicitly quoting the sources) some Orphic elements which he was interested in and knew well.

I am also of the opinion that when he refers to the importance of unveiling the secret meaning behind mysterious expressions this may refer to personalities such as the Derveni author. The Derveni commentator and the Stoics are evidence of the fact that etymologizing and allegoresis were a practice which could be used to provide support for a theoretical view or to display esoteric knowledge.⁶¹¹ This could mean that the passage quoted in the *Cratylus* can be seen in the wider picture of the etymologizing exercise of the name of Zeus linked with a henotheistic view of the divinity. This is found in the Stoic sources I quoted, and I argue that this is the result of a reflection on an Orphic source linked with an Orphic henotheistic view of the divine. Proclus appears to take this one step further with his philosophical etymology and a stress on theology. Zeus is indeed described by the philosopher as both immanent (encosmic) and transcendent and this is why, I think, the Orphic conception of the cosmic henotheistic (theopantistic) god was so interesting for Proclus.⁶¹²

⁶¹⁰ See Baxter 1992; Barney 2001; Riley 2005.

⁶¹¹ See later §5.1 for the analysis of allegorical interpretations and a reference to the exegetical activity of the author of the Derveni Papyrus.

⁶¹² See Duvick-Tarrant 2007 and Abbate 2017.

3.3 Fr. 543 F (239 K.)

Εἷς Ζεὺς, εἷς Ἀΐδης, εἷς Ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος,
Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι· τί σοι δίχα ταῦτ' ἀγορεύω,⁶¹³

One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus.

One god in all things: why am I saying these things to you in two ways?⁶¹⁴

I would now like to proceed with the analysis of the third Orphic fragment that presents henotheistic features. The two-verse fragment, which I have just quoted in isolation as edited by Bernabé and which I will soon analyse in its diverse literary contexts, belongs to a group of selected Orphic fragments differently attributed to a lost Dionysian Orphic poem.

Otto Kern collected fr. 236-244 under the name ΒΑΚΧΙΚΑ⁶¹⁵ commenting that “Ego s. Βακχικά composui Macrobiani locos ad Bacchum pertinentes Rohdeum secutus”.⁶¹⁶ Many of these Orphic fragments related to the divine figure of Dionysos are reported by Macrobius under the name of Orpheus, probably quoting from a Neoplatonic source (possibly Porphyry through Cornelius Labeo).⁶¹⁷ However, even though Bernabé agrees with the Dionysian nature of the fragments, he prefers to refer to this group as ‘hymnum in Bacchum-Solem’, saying that “novimus hoc carmen Orpheo attributum e Macrobio, qui, ut videtur, id invenit apud quendam Neoplatonicum auctorem”.⁶¹⁸ The scholar adds to the group another fragment, that is fr. 545 (354 K.) from Proclus.

⁶¹³ Fr. 543 F (239 K.).

⁶¹⁴ My translation.

⁶¹⁵ Fr. 236-243 K. = fr. 538-545 F Bernabé.

⁶¹⁶ Kern 1922: 249.

⁶¹⁷ “Cum Macrobiani versus Orphici omnes haud dubie ad unum Orphei librum senioris aetatis pertineant, cuius notitiam e Cornelio Labeone, qui Porphyrium Neoplatonicum excerpsit, cepisse videtur” (Kern 1922: 249). See also West 1983: 206 and Bernabé 2005a: 112.

⁶¹⁸ Bernabé 2005a: 112.

Before Bernabé, West had also proposed considering the group as a poem and was similarly sceptical about entitling it Βακχικά.⁶¹⁹ He defines the whole group as a

late Hellenistic Orphic hymn to Helios [...]. There too the influence of the theogonic tradition (either the Hieronymian Theogony or the Rhapsodies) is apparent. [...] The atmosphere of syncretism in which this hymn was composed was favourable to the penetration of Orphic elements into other theologies.⁶²⁰

Although I am not convinced that this group of fragments represents a proper hymn to the Sun, it is certainly evident that the texts show a unitary and coherent thematic nucleus, in which the centre is constituted by the gods Helios and Dionysos. Here a clear henotheistic tendency is present: especially in our fragment 543 F, the gods are merged together to form one god (Εἷς) as we will now analyse. West noticed that these texts share a double nature. On the one hand they present features of intuitive beliefs, such as terms and attributes typical of the hymnodic genre, as well as an evident syncretistic tendency. On the other hand, they have also been passed down in highly reflective sources (philosophical Neoplatonic texts) and present characteristics that cannot but be ascribed to a speculative re-elaboration due to a literary, religious and theological awareness.

Let us then introduce the context of the fragment as quoted by Macrobius. In the first book of the *Saturnalia* part of the first morning of the first day of banquet is dedicated to the discussion of religious topics,⁶²¹ and “the investigation (*hermeneia*) of divine matters by exegesis was connected to educated culture and rhetoric, that is to say it was a form of dialectic which assimilated religious experience by means of an interpretative priestly tradition”.⁶²² Here the Latin author describes the figure of Apollo as identified with the Sun,

⁶¹⁹ “Fr. 354 (Proclus) is probably from the same poem. Kern should not have put the Macrobian fragments under the title *Bacchica*” (West 1983: 206).

⁶²⁰ West 1983: 253.

⁶²¹ For an introduction on the life and work of the Latin author see Marinone 1967: 9-97; Davies 1969: 1-25; Kaster 2010 and the bibliographical references that can there be found.

⁶²² Belayche 2010: 148.

Liber and Dionysos as found for example in Aristotle, among the Spartans and in Thrace.⁶²³

Macrobius later cites Orpheus on the identification between the Sun and Dionysos:

Idem versus Orpheici Εὐβουλῆα vocantes boni consilii hunc deum praestitem monstrant. Nam, si conceptu mentis consilia nascuntur, mundi autem mentem solem esse opinantur auctores, a quo in homines manat intellegendi principium, merito boni consilii solem antistitem crediderunt. Solem Liberum esse manifeste pronuntiat Orpheus hoc versu:

Ἥλιος δὲν Διόνυσον ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν.

Et is quidem versus absolutior, ille vero eiusdem vatis operosior:

Εἷς Ζεὺς, εἷς Ἅιδης, εἷς Ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος.⁶²⁴

The Orphic verses, too, by calling the sun ‘Eubouleus’, indicate that he is the patron of ‘good counsel’; for, if counsel is the offspring of the mind and if, in the opinion of our authorities, the sun is the mind of the universe from which the first beginning of intelligence is diffused among mankind, then the sun is rightly believed to preside over good counsel. In the line:

The sun, which men also call by name Dionysus

Orpheus manifestly declares that Liber is the sun, and the meaning here is certainly quite clear; but the following line from the same poet is more difficult:

One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus.⁶²⁵

Macrobius defines this verse as more difficult than others to comprehend (*operosior*), and indeed this conception of the god as a union between different gods with different features might have seemed peculiar. Nonetheless, the terminology and formal (poetic) structure that emerges here can be associated with the horizontal and centripetal henotheistic tendency that we have previously analysed.⁶²⁶

The ritual henotheistic *formula* εἷς θεός, similar to the formulaic expression and repetition of the term εἷς that we here read in the Orphic fragment, has been long studied by scholarship⁶²⁷ and can be found in pagan inscriptions and rituals mostly referring to ‘saviour’

⁶²³ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.18.1-11.

⁶²⁴ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.18.17-18.

⁶²⁵ Transl. Davies 1969: 130-131.

⁶²⁶ See §1.2.

⁶²⁷ See Belayche 2010: 147-150. Versnel (1990: 96-212) noticeably entitles one of his chapters ‘*heis Dionysos*’.

gods.⁶²⁸ These gods are, in such eulogistic contexts, supreme not because they have emerged and been set apart from the plurality of the divine beings, but precisely because they appear to have unified this plurality in one divine, complex personality. As Belayche pointed out about the expression εἷς θεός, “this redesigning of the architecture of the divine world does not require the *heis theos* to be exclusive; on the contrary, the exaltation of a divinity takes on greater significance in a pluralistic context”.⁶²⁹ The plurality is therefore, again, never called into question but rather ‘redesigned’.

The repetitive acclamation of one god, single but also identified with many other divine figures, is mainly considered as a spontaneous ritual manifestation more than the result of an attentive reflection on the condition of the one god at issue. Nevertheless, the case of our Orphic fragment seems a little bit more complex. Indeed, the formula εἷς + name of the god can be mostly traced to an intuitive context and has a strong relation with eulogies and acclamations which constitute its origin and background. As we can also see from the passage of the *Saturnalia*, the quotation from the Orphic fragment is later followed by the Orphic prescriptions on the ornaments and vestments worn by Liber at the ceremonies performed in his honour.⁶³⁰ However, this fragment also presents features related to more reflective contexts: indeed, as we have seen, it has been passed down to us by philosophical tradition (possibly Neoplatonism through Cornelius Labeo) as Boyancé has pointed out.⁶³¹

On this reflective re-elaboration of the text Wolfgang Fauth, in his work on syncretistic theology in Late Antiquity focusing on the divine figure of Helios,⁶³² has argued for the existence of a kind of ‘solar monotheism’ - ‘solaren Monotheismus’ (especially in the case of

⁶²⁸ See Belayche 2010: 151, Cerutti 2010: 19-20 and my analysis in §1.3.

⁶²⁹ Belayche 2010: 166.

⁶³⁰ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.18.22 = fr. 541 F (238 K.).

⁶³¹ Boyancé 1955: 201. See also Boyancé 1966: 48-49, in which the author also hypothesizes that “le rite téléstique, décrit par le fragment orphique cité par Macrobe, semble donc avoir appartenu depuis longtemps, à travers les siècles, aux orgies dionysiaques” (Boyancé 1966: 49).

⁶³² Fauth 1995. See especially Fauth 1995: 157-164.

our fragment) influenced by Stoic pantheistic views.⁶³³ Although I do not embrace this kind of terminology, it is interesting to note the relationship which existed between this fragment and its speculative reception, most of all its manipulation by Neoplatonic philosophers. This fragment 543 F, which as we have seen presents many intuitive features of a hymn to a one god, appears to have been passed down thanks to its philosophical depth and was the object of a Neoplatonic speculation linked with theurgy.⁶³⁴ Fr. 543 F also contains a statement close to a pantheistic view of the divinity (Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι) and I would like to further stress how the text thus constitutes another interesting case of fusion between the two perspectives, that is a possible intuitive ritualistic background incorporated and manipulated by a later and more aware reflection on the status of the divinity.

In a section entitled ‘the enunciatory contexts and functionality of *heis theos* acclamations’, Nicole Belayche points out that

The attestations of *heis theos* can be divided into two groups: ritual documents, notably inscriptions, amulets and gems; and speculative or philosophical expositions, which were literary compositions designed for demonstrative purposes. By nature these belong to different registers, which can nevertheless overlap with one another.⁶³⁵

Even though one should be careful in easily attributing henotheistic features to texts in which the simple term θεός is referred to a divinity to express the depersonalisation of a superior power,⁶³⁶ I consider this source as an example of a centripetal henotheistic tendency in which different gods seem to be merged in a unified perception of the divinity, even if we don’t know to which degree of awareness and speculation. It is therefore clear that from this

⁶³³ Fauth 1995: 163-164.

⁶³⁴ A study on the relationship between theurgy, philosophy and mysticism in (late) Neoplatonism and especially Proclus can be found in Sheppard 1982.

⁶³⁵ Belayche 2010: 147.

⁶³⁶ See Belayche 2010: 163.

fragment (and group of fragments) a syncretistic conception of the divine emerges, a view which is focused on the divine figures of Dionysos, Apollo, Helios and Zeus.

As I have anticipated, Versnel dedicates one entire chapter (*'heis Dionysos'*) of his book *Ter Unus* to the figure of Dionysos in the *Bacchae*,⁶³⁷ described by the author as a sort of Hellenistic god *ante litteram* presenting henotheistic features.⁶³⁸ When trying to describe the first appearances of Dionysos in henotheistic terms and the possible origins of this perception of the god, Versnel cites the Gurob Papyrus when discussing the association of the god with the acclamation *'Εἷς'*:⁶³⁹

there is only one pre-hellenistic testimony of this acclamation, viz. in a Gurob papyrus, which has preserved a fragment of what may have been an Orphic book. It contains an invocation of the *Kouretes* and the password: *Heis Dionusos*. [...] So, as far as we can see, Dionysos was the first god to be hailed with an acclamation that became the most characteristic identification of the great gods of later times. The problem, however, is that we have no idea about the cultural identity of the acclamation, although the text itself betrays unmistakably Orphic features. Did it originate in Greece or with a local cult group in Egypt, influenced by Egyptian conceptions?⁶⁴⁰

The association of the god Dionysos with the acclamation *'Εἷς'* may be traced back to the 4th/3rd century BCE and, as Versnel states, possibly to Orphic contexts as the Gurob testimony shows. I would now like to briefly compare our fragment 543 F with this example of a late Hellenistic text (as our *Hymn to the Sun*) in order to shed light on the Orphic henotheistic nuance of the two texts.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁷ Versnel 1990: 96-212.

⁶³⁸ Versnel 1990: 205.

⁶³⁹ As we shall soon examine, the papyrus is generally dated back to the 3rd century BCE. The text we are about to read, however, is dated by Versnel to the 4th century at least (Versnel 2011: 302).

⁶⁴⁰ Versnel 2011: 301-302

⁶⁴¹ This comparison is supported most of all by Kern's and Bernabé's editions, for which see Kern 1922: 101-104 and Bernabé 2005a: 119 and 150-7, who classifies the text we are about to quote as 'Orphica in Papyro Gurob tradita' (Fr. 578 F [31 K.]). See also Hordern 2000: 134. Bernabé quotes the main bibliographical references supporting the Orphic nature of the passage in Bernabé 2005a: 150 including Smyly, Tierney, Sfameni Gasparro, Festugière, Burkert, Hordern, Morand and West.

The source is represented by the fragmentary text written on a papyrus found in Egypt (Gurob) at the beginning of the 20th century, dating back to the 3rd century BCE⁶⁴² and edited by Gilbert Smyly with an ample commentary in 1921.⁶⁴³ The first column of the roll contains the remains (the ends of 30 lines and a few letters from the second column) of a ritual of some mysteries.⁶⁴⁴ In fact, the ritual contains many symbols and is composed of two parts: the first one is a prayer followed by the description of a sacrifice of a ram and a goat, and the second a list of the objects contained in the basket.⁶⁴⁵

Burkert and Hordern convincingly considered this text to be an example of an Orphic *Hieros Logos*, typical of the mysteries and mostly the Dionysian ones: supporting this thesis are, among others, the elements connected to a ritual based on the death of the infant Dionysos, the appearance of the βουκόλος and specific deities such as Brimo, Eubouleus and Erikepaïos as well as the *symbola*, *formulae* and prayers to be pronounced by the initiates.⁶⁴⁶ The text (which can be found in the Appendix, item 25) contains various terms related to mysteries; some belong to the Eleusinian tradition⁶⁴⁷ while others seem to refer to our Orphic

⁶⁴² See Morand 2001: 277.

⁶⁴³ Smyly 1921. The papyrus actually contains many fragments and columns regarding various accounts of taxes, receipts, letters and rent reports. We will here only focus on the first, extremely interesting, column on the ritual of the mysteries. On the Gurob papyrus and its link with the mysteries, along with Kern and Bernabé, see Smyly 1921; Tierney 1922; West 1983: 170-172 (who talks about elements close to the Dionysos of the *Eudemian Theogony* as well as others suggesting syncretism of several ‘mystery’ cults such as the Eleusinian mysteries and that of Sabazios and Erikepaïos); Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 106; Hordern 2000; Morand 2001: 276-282 and the bibliography which is there cited.

⁶⁴⁴ The prayers are most probably hexametrical: see Hordern 2000: 131.

⁶⁴⁵ On the ritual aspects connected to this text see most of all Tierney 1922.

⁶⁴⁶ See Burkert 1987: 70-71 and Hordern 2000: 131-132. On Eubouleus and Erikepaïos see also Morand 2001: 165 and 189.

⁶⁴⁷ Smyly underlines features such as the invocation ‘σῶϊσόν με Βριμῶ με[γάλη]’-‘save me, great Brimo’ (col I, 5) and the emphasis placed on Demeter and Rhea. Tierney is of the opinion that “it is certain, however, that in the absence of evidence we cannot speak of Orphic influence on Eleusis, though we may of Eleusinian on Orphism. As other parts of this text are clearly Orphic (e.g. lines 22, 23, 25, 30), we are only justified in saying that we have here an Orphic text with Eleusinian elements [...]” (Tierney 1922: 79). See also West 1983: 171-172.

mysteries. West has noticed that “there is also a good deal which takes us beyond the Dionysus of the Eudemian Theogony and suggests syncretism of several mystery cults”.⁶⁴⁸

At line 18, Eubouleus is invoked: a divine entity that is usually linked with Orphism and that we have previously encountered in the passage in which Macrobius is quoting our fragment 543 F.⁶⁴⁹

The statement that follows is extremely interesting for the aim of this research. The prayer continues with a possible ‘characteristically Orphic expression’,⁶⁵⁰ a reference to the one god Dionysus:

] εἰς Διόνυσος, σύμβολα.⁶⁵¹

There is one Dionysus. Tokens

This expression is worth taking into consideration since one of the central gods of Orphic tradition is presented as a ‘one god’ in centripetal, syncretistic terms back in the 3rd century BCE. The terminology recalls the εἰς Διόνυσος of our fragment 543 F in which the gods are linked with the term εἰς. The acclamation thus functions as a way to underline the supremacy of the god;⁶⁵² the difference here might be that this context of the Gurob papyrus appears to be more intuitive as related to a ritual and temporary performance.⁶⁵³ The word that follows the henotheistic expression, σύμβολα, is probably the beginning of the next section of verses

⁶⁴⁸ West 1983: 171.

⁶⁴⁹ “Idem versus Orpheici Εὐβουλῆα vocantes boni consilii hunc deum praestitem monstrant” (Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.18.17). “The Orphic verses, too, by calling the sun ‘Eubouleus’, indicate that he is the patron of good counsel” (Transl. Davies 1969: 130). Smyly observes that this figure is found in many *Orphic Hymns* and in the tablets of Thurii, but also underlines that Eubouleus is sometimes related to the Eleusinian mysteries as well. See Smyly 1921: 5 and West 1983: 171. For more information about the link between the Gurob papyrus and the Orphic tablets see, among others, Hordern 2000.

⁶⁵⁰ Smyly 1921: 2.

⁶⁵¹ Fr. 578 F (31 K.), 23b.

⁶⁵² “Le papyrus laisse un espace vierge avant cette expression, ce qui la met en évidence. Il s’agit d’une acclamation destinée à mettre en évidence la grandeur du dieu” (Morand 2001: 280).

⁶⁵³ Tierney 1922: 87.

and possibly indicates that the words that followed were to be considered ‘mystic passwords, or test phrases’.⁶⁵⁴

The Gurob papyrus therefore appears to be an interesting term of comparison for us as a manifestation of a henotheistic tendency in a context typical of (or at least close to) Orphic formulations, in which a ‘one god’ is invoked. I would argue that this could reinforce my view on the henotheistic nature of our fragment 543 F, in which the gods are merged together to form one god (Εἷς). Both texts present intuitive beliefs’ features: *symbola*, *formulae* and prayers to be pronounced by the initiates during the ritual (in the case of the Gurob Papyrus) as well as terms and attributes typical of the hymnodic genre (in fr. 543 F). Besides, both share what appears to me to be a syncretistic tendency although in fragment 543 F a more speculative re-elaboration due to a literary, religious and theological awareness can be observed.

⁶⁵⁴ Smyly 1921: 7. On the use and function of these σύμβολα the scholar hypothesizes that “the σύμβολα of the mysteries were Divided Words, resembling a sign and a countersign, consisting [...] of a *signum* and a *responsum*; one clause being spoken by one initiate, the other by the second. Everyone present at a celebration of the mysteries would be tested in this way [...]” (Smyly 1921: 7-8). See also Tierney 1922: 87.

3.4 Fr. 620 F (299 K.)

The next fragment we are now about to analyse is taken from a lost Orphic work known as Ὀρκοί (*Oaths*). Otto Kern groups this fragment together with two others⁶⁵⁵ and Bernabé entitles this section⁶⁵⁶ *‘fragmenta iuramentorum Orpheo attributorum’*.⁶⁵⁷ As Martin West has pointed out, “the first thing the initiate in a mystery cult had to do was, of course, to swear that he would not divulge the secrets to which he was about to be admitted. Both the adjuration and the candidate’s response might for greater solemnity be versified and attributed to Orpheus”.⁶⁵⁸ Riedweg also comments that “dies dürfte die normale Praxis in den Mysterien gewesen sein”,⁶⁵⁹ and as Luc Brisson also points out:

En effet, dans un culte à mystères, l’initié devait d’abord jurer de ne pas divulguer les secrets qu’on venait de lui transmettre. Aussi bien les abjurations de l’officiant que les réponses du candidat devaient, pour assurer plus de solennité, être versifiées et attribuées à Orphée.⁶⁶⁰

Albert Henrichs entitles one entire section of his work *Die Phoinikika des Lollianos: Fragmente eines Neuen Griechischen Romans* ‘Eid und mysterium’ (Oath and mystery).⁶⁶¹ After having analysed the ritual linked with many kinds of oaths from ancient Greek contexts to Jewish, Roman and Christian ones, the author focuses on the proper ‘Mysterieneid’,⁶⁶² and then takes into consideration (among others) the Isiac mysteries, quoting the same texts (oaths) that are considered by West possible parallels of our Orphic fragment.⁶⁶³ Henrichs comments that

⁶⁵⁵ See Kern 1922: 312-314.

⁶⁵⁶ Frr. 619 F (300 K.) - 620 F (299 K.).

⁶⁵⁷ Bernabé 2005: 191.

⁶⁵⁸ West 1983: 34.

⁶⁵⁹ Riedweg 1994b: 334.

⁶⁶⁰ Brisson 1995: 2923.

⁶⁶¹ Henrichs 1972: 37-44.

⁶⁶² Henrichs 1972: 40.

⁶⁶³ That is, PSI 1162 and PSI 1290. See Merkelbach 1967a: 72-73; Henrichs 1972: 41; West 1983: 35 n. 105.

the oath contains important theological and cosmological introductory elements, and that the text is overall positioned under the ‘guaranteeing’ role of the one god Isis (or Osiris). It also contains the traditional ban of divulging the secrets of the cult to strangers and non-initiates and ends with the even more traditional sanction *formula*.⁶⁶⁴

The Orphic *Oaths* might have been a collection of the *formulae* used by the initiates to swear secrecy and not to reveal the contents of the mysteries they were about to be shown. Some of these *formulae* may have been collected adding some literary features thus creating a sort of aura of sacredness. Before going deeper into the matter, let us read the text of the fragment:

Οὐρανὸν ὀρκίζω σε, θεοῦ μεγάλου σοφὸν ἔργον·
αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός, τὴν φθέγγατο πρῶτον,
ἥνίκα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἑαῖς στηρίζατο βουλαῖς.⁶⁶⁵

I adjure you by heaven, wise endeavour of a great god,
I swear by the voice of the father, who made it resound at first,
when he fixed all the cosmos according to his will.⁶⁶⁶

This fragment is quoted in the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*,⁶⁶⁷ and is said to be contained in the Ὅρκιοι as I have just mentioned.⁶⁶⁸ As we have seen, the *Cohortatio ad Graecos* is an hortatory apologetic literary work composed around the 4th century CE and attributed by some scholars to the bishop Marcellus of Ancyra. The author, fighting against both external (pagan) and internal (Arian) enemies, aims to demonstrate how monotheism could have been traced also to Greek contexts, even though in an imperfect and incomplete way. Having confuted the most important Greek sources (Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle), he proceeds

⁶⁶⁴ See Henrichs 1972: 41.

⁶⁶⁵ Fr. 620 F (299 K.)

⁶⁶⁶ My translation.

⁶⁶⁷ Here I will only mention a few features of the content of the literary work and of the context of the quotation of the fragment 620 F (299 K.) we are now taking into consideration. For an introduction to the text see Marcovich 1990, Pouderon 2009, Arcari 2011 and the section dedicated to the *Cohortatio* in §2.2

⁶⁶⁸ *Coh. Gr.* 15.2 = Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 1.46.

describing the wisdom of Moses and the prophets, previous and superior to all others. He illustrates with many examples the so-called thesis of the *furtum* of the Greeks, according to which many religious notions and images represented by Greek authors would be the result of a theft (*furtum*) from the Mosaic tradition.⁶⁶⁹ This theft would have happened thanks to a contact that occurred in Egypt, and one of the main theses of the work is that the Sibyl (known through the *Sibylline Oracles*), Orpheus, Homer, Pythagoras, Solon, and Plato learned the truth about the One God in Egypt thanks to Moses' teachings and the compiler therefore quotes many Orphic fragments that would witness this thesis of Greek authors being Hellenic prophets of an original monotheism.⁶⁷⁰ The author of the *Cohortatio* thus places here the figure of Orpheus as a sort of teacher of monotheism in polytheistic contexts, changing his mind thanks to the influence of Moses and preaching about the one God.

Martin West discusses this fragment when speaking about what he calls 'Jewish Orphica' (including the *Testament of Orpheus* we will analyse in the 5th chapter). He argues that the fragment would be the result of a Jewish forgery or – less likely – a Hermetic text.⁶⁷¹ West then goes on to analyse syncretistic and pantheistic tendencies in Orphic hymns. His thesis that this fragment would be the result of Jewish forgery will be here briefly examined, along with his reference to other scholars' positions about this fragment belonging to the Hermetic tradition. I will here try to understand if this fragment might be considered a Jewish product, and to what extent it has 'genuine' Orphic henotheistic features in it. It is true that this

⁶⁶⁹ *Coh. Gr.* 14.

⁶⁷⁰ *Coh. Gr.* 15.1-2. The author quotes, indeed, the *Testament of Orpheus/Hieros Logos*, fr. 543 F (239 K.) and our fr. 620 F (299 K.). For an in-depth analysis of the sources of these quotations see Arcari 2011: 290 n.36.

⁶⁷¹ West 1983: 35. Even though I will not here take into consideration this hypothesis, I can't avoid reporting that some sources attribute this text to Hermes Trismegistus and the Hermetic tradition. Indeed Malalas, the 6th century Syriac historian, believes it to be possible to ascribe this fragment to Hermes Trismegistus even though, as West observes, by his time the figures of Orpheus and Hermes were almost interchangeable. Ferguson comments that the verses "are quoted, in connection with the *palinodia*, in pseudo-Justin *Cohortatio ad gent.* 15. Malalas (*Testim.*) took them from Cyril, but by mistake ascribed them to Hermes Trismegistus instead of Orpheus" (Ferguson 1936: 202 n.7). The verses are attributed to Hermes Trismegistus by Malalas *Chronogr.* 2.27 Dindorf.

fragment is quoted in Christian sources (such as the *Cohortatio ad Graecos* and Cyril's *Contra Iulianum*) but this mainly concerns reception and I tend to think that one does not necessarily need to focus only on the fact that the original source must have been a Jewish forgery with monotheistic features or aims. Indeed, some of its possible henotheistic features and background should also be taken into consideration.

Let us first, then, have a look at the analysis of Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst, who dedicates to it an entire section of her book on the quotations of Greek poets in Christian apologetic works.⁶⁷² Here she reports all the major sources for the fragment following the *Cohortatio*, that is Cyril's *Contra Iulianum*, Malalas' *Chronographia* and the *Suda*. Zeegers, stressing the element of the appearance of the figure of the divine father ('αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός'), reports the possibility that this fragment is a Jewish falsification as Martin West does along with Ferguson.⁶⁷³ However, she is also careful about making strong statements and concludes that she would be more inclined to consider this fragment as composed by a Greek poet close to an Orphic milieu and syncretistic henotheistic influences, then utilised by consecutive writers in order to convey Jewish or (later) Christian messages.⁶⁷⁴ I personally embrace this scholarly perspective, since in analysing the main features of this fragment we may consider many of these elements as close to what I have previously defined as reflective belief's henotheistic characteristics. Riedweg is also careful when saying that "ob sie allerdings tatsächlich von einem jüdischen Fälscher stammen oder wie die Zauberpapyri, mit denen sie z.T. erstaunliche Übereinstimmungen aufweisen, lediglich stark jüdisch beeinflusst sind, kann kaum entschieden werden".⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷² Zeegers 1972: 213-216.

⁶⁷³ Indeed, Ferguson is of the opinion that the author of the fragment is Jewish with strong Orphic influences. In fact, he argues that "these three verses are doubtless a Jewish forgery, and probably of the same origin as the *palinodia* of Orpheus" (Ferguson 1936: 202 n.7). With '*palinodia*' Ferguson means here the *Testament of Orpheus/Hieros Logos*.

⁶⁷⁴ Zeegers 1972: 215-216.

⁶⁷⁵ Riedweg 1994b: 335.

It is now worth analysing the fragment in its single components, trying to extrapolate the most important features that appear in the three lines of the oath. The first word that we encounter is Οὐρανός, the sky. The initiate first swears invoking the sky, an element which appears to be important in Orphic sources as well as in henotheistic ones. Riedweg particularly stresses the element of the sky when pointing out that “die Anrufung des Himmels als kosmischer Zeuge könnte ein originaler paganer Bestandteil sein”.⁶⁷⁶ We had met this feature before in the *Hymn to Zeus* when the god was described as

Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.⁶⁷⁷

Zeus is the foundation of earth and of starry heaven.⁶⁷⁸

And then, in the description of the divine body of the one god as *macranthropos*:

τοῦ δὴ τοι κεφαλὴ μὲν ἰδεῖν καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα
οὐρανὸς αἰγλήεις, ὃν χρύσεαι ἀμφὶς ἔθειραι
ἄστρον μαρμαρέων περικαλλέες ἠερέθονται,⁶⁷⁹

His head and beauteous face the radiant heaven
reveals, and round him float in shining waves
the golden tresses of the twinkling stars⁶⁸⁰

I have previously observed that in this representation of the universe the divine body of Zeus is described as identified with heaven/οὐρανός, along with aither/αἰθήρ at the top and air/ἄήρ lower (and beneath them the earth and underworld). The author of the hymn thus ‘draws’ the parts of this divine body according to the image of the *macranthropos*,⁶⁸¹ which corresponds to the three parts in which the universe is structured. Here heaven plays a very

⁶⁷⁶ Riedweg 1994b: 335.

⁶⁷⁷ Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 3 (= *De mundo* 7.401a, 25).

⁶⁷⁸ Transl. Thom 2014: 55.

⁶⁷⁹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 11-13 (= Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.8.2 = Porph. fr. 354 F Smith).

⁶⁸⁰ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

⁶⁸¹ See Bianchi 1970: 99 and 1975: 255. Zeus is also defined as ‘cosmic man’ in Bianchi 1975: 257 and Betegh 2004: 182-223.

important part, being the image of the representation of the one god as both transcendent (up in the sky) but also immanent in the universe. Οὐρανός thus seems to be a relevant element in the representation of the henotheistic Orphic god and might have been a recurrent way to depict this one god.

The element of the heaven also appears in another Orphic fragment that is generally attributed to the lost Orphic *Oaths*:

ναὶ μὴν ἄθανάτων γεννήτορας αἰὲν ἑόντων
πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ γαῖάν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἠδὲ σελήνην
ἡέλιόν τε Φάνη τε μέγαν καὶ Νύκτα μέλαιναν.⁶⁸²

On the creators of the immortals that always are
on fire, water, earth, heaven and moon
sun, great Phanes and dark night.⁶⁸³

The same *formula* appears in a few Hermetic sources⁶⁸⁴ and magical papyri,⁶⁸⁵ and I am tempted to consider it a plausible feature in oaths of the mysteries, also when referring to a one god (in the case of Orphic henotheistic sources).

The second element that requires our attention is the other *formula* ‘θεοῦ μεγάλου’, ‘great god’ which is a recurrent terminology in henotheistic contexts.⁶⁸⁶ Nicole Belayche analyses the term μέγας θεός (also as juxtaposed to the acclamation Εἷς θεός) as acclaiming the experience of a divinity who is supreme and pre-eminent but not alone in an exclusive position.⁶⁸⁷ She quotes many cases, an example of which is represented by an acclamation to the Lydian heavenly god Men: ‘Εἷς θεός ἐν οὐρανοῖς, μέγας Μὴν Οὐράνιος, μεγάλη δύναμις τοῦ ἄθανάτου θεοῦ’.⁶⁸⁸ Belayche comments that

⁶⁸² Fr. 619 F (300 K.).

⁶⁸³ My translation.

⁶⁸⁴ See Riedweg 1994b: 335.

⁶⁸⁵ PGM I, 305-309; IV, 1708; V, 98. See Merkelbach 1967a: 72.

⁶⁸⁶ See §1.3 and Belayche 2010.

⁶⁸⁷ Belayche 2010: 155- 157.

⁶⁸⁸ CMRDM 1, 83. See Belayche 2010: 156.

In this *eulogia* Men was experienced as an exceptional power, mighty and celestial, within the superior world. In other circumstances and by other devotees, such universal mastery was attributed to other divinities [...] So far as one can decide for each individual testimony, according to the starkly hierarchical representation of the divine world which is one of its main features in the imperial period, the *heis theos* of ritual documents is not similar to the transcendent first principle, a philosophical concept that might be labelled monotheistic in theoretical theology.⁶⁸⁹

Although this kind of terminology can also be found in Jewish and Christian contexts,⁶⁹⁰ it does not seem to appear as a recurrent *formula* in monotheistic sources.⁶⁹¹ The comparison with other pagan henotheistic sources might therefore encourage us to take into consideration the possibility that terms such as μέγας θεός and the ones related to a ‘heavenly’ god might be linked with genuine pagan (and henotheistic) sources, such as the Orphic fragment we are now analysing.

Another element which needs to be taken into consideration is the term πατήρ (‘αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός’ – ‘I swear to you by the voice of the father’). While many scholars have considered this element as evidence of the Jewish forgery of the text (along with the word αὐδὴν),⁶⁹² I would like to draw here a possible comparison with another Orphic fragment we have just examined, that is fr. 416 (298 K.). I suggest possible different perspectives on the analysis of this source, not to reject *in toto* previous observations but rather to propose possible alternative views and cast light on the issue.

When examining fragment 416 (298 K.) contained in the Μικρότερος Κρατήρ (Shorter Krater) we analysed the use of the term πατήρ in the last line of the text:

⁶⁸⁹ Belayche 2010: 156-157.

⁶⁹⁰ Belayche 2010: 155 observes how the expression was familiar, for example, to the language of Psalms.

⁶⁹¹ See for example Riedweg 1994b: 336 and Belayche 2010: 155.

⁶⁹² See West 1983: 35; Riedweg 1994b: 336 and the bibliography which is there cited.

εἷς δὲ πατήρ οὗτος πάντων θνητῶν τε θεῶν τε.⁶⁹³

This is the one father of all mortals and gods.⁶⁹⁴

As we have seen, the author of the fragment includes another aspect in describing the act of creation by the hands of the god. The focus there is on the fatherhood of Zeus to mortals and gods thus creating a sort of hierarchic picture.⁶⁹⁵ The supreme god Zeus is represented as father of all things, demiurge and vivifying divine figure. The fragment we are now analysing thus presents some analogies, representing the one god as a paternal figure in relation with the world (κόσμον ἅπαντα) he has created (here, στηρίζατο). It could therefore be argued that attributes linked with the semantic area of fatherhood might not have been unknown to pagan sources, or even sources which present henotheistic tendencies. It may then be possible to consider the use of the term πατήρ not only as a sign of a monotheistic background of the text, but also a possible pagan feature referring to one divine paternal figure, thus reinforcing the idea of a more fluid and rich cultural background.

The last element I would like to briefly mention here is the role played by the *cosmos*. Indeed, the word is very significant since it seems to be of Greek resonance⁶⁹⁶ and appears to underline the relationship between the one god and the orderly universe he has created. The god is, in this fragment, not shown exactly as a theopantistic divine figure -that is as part of the world as in other Orphic henotheistic contexts. However, the quotation of the *cosmos* as fixed (στηρίζατο) according to his will recalls the importance of the relation between the god and the universe that we have discussed since the very first observations on the *Hymn to Zeus*.

⁶⁹³ Fr. 416 (298 K.), 4.

⁶⁹⁴ My translation.

⁶⁹⁵ See Bernabé 2009: 58-61, as well as the bibliography cited in those pages.

⁶⁹⁶ Riedweg 1994b: 336. See for example Emp. 31 B 134 D.-K.

3.5 Fr. 691 F (248 K.)

The last fragment I will take into consideration is a text reported by Clement of Alexandria⁶⁹⁷ and Eusebius of Caesarea,⁶⁹⁸ whose reception of Orphic texts we have analysed in the previous chapter. Kern classifies this source as belonging to a corpus of texts known as ‘Διαθηκαί’ (Orphic Testaments), used by Christian authors to prove that the legendary singer Orpheus had converted to monotheism later in his life (a sort of *palinodia*).⁶⁹⁹ Bernabé is careful and defines it as ‘*hymnus Iudaicus Alexandrinus*’,⁷⁰⁰ while West comments that

Clement quotes a line from a hymn to a god who is both son and father of Zeus, and a longer passage from a hymn addressed to a supreme god who is both mother and father, whom the Moirai and other gods obey, and whose fiery throne is attended by messengers [...] who supervise the deeds of men. Kern was wrong to assign the fragment to the *Testament*, which is addressed to Musaeus, not to God. Nor do I think it can be properly called Jewish, though the influence of Judaism can be seen in it. I regard it as a syncretistic work, probably composed in Alexandria about the first century AD.⁷⁰¹

I also consider this fragment as the product of a syncretistic conception of the divinity, in which in a pagan background are inserted Jewish influences and features. Furthermore, I believe this pagan background to be henotheistic, since the god that is represented in this source appears to be described as a one supreme god, ruling over the universe and other gods, as I shall now analyse. Le Boulluec defines this sort of ‘hymn’ as an Orphic Hymn to Zeus, noting its polytheistic nature.⁷⁰² Let us then read the fragment after this brief introduction:

⁶⁹⁷ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.125.

⁶⁹⁸ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.13.52.

⁶⁹⁹ “In numero librorum Orphicorum a Suida allatorum deest hoc carmen a scriptoribus Christianis saepe adhibitum, ut Orpheus παλινωιδίαν cecinisse probarent” (Kern 1922: 255).

⁷⁰⁰ Bernabé 2005a: 250.

⁷⁰¹ West 1983: 35–36.

⁷⁰² Le Boulluec 1981: 350.

Αἰθέρος ἥδ' Ἄϊδου, πόντου γαίης τε τύραννε,
 ὃς βρονταῖς σείεις Βριαρὸν δόμον Οὐλύμποιο·
 δαίμονες ὃν φρίσσουσι, θεῶν δὲ δέδοικεν ὄμιλος·
 ὧι Μοῖραι πείθονται, ἀμείλικτοί περ ἑοῦσαι·
 ἄφθιτε, μητροπάτωρ, οὗ θυμῷ πάντα δονεῖται· 5
 ὃς κινεῖς ἀνέμους, νεφέλησι δὲ πάντα καλύπτεις,
 πρηστῆρσι σχίζων πλατὺν αἰθέρα· σὴ μὲν ἐν ἄστροις
 τάξις, ἀναλλάκτοισιν ἐφημοσύναισι τρέχουσα·
 σῶι δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρεστᾶσιν πολύμοχθοι
 ἄγγελοι, οἷσι μέμηλε βροτοῖς ὥς πάντα τελεῖται· 10
 σὸν μὲν ἔαρ λάμπει νέον ἄνθεσι πορφυρέοισιν·
 σὸς χειμῶν ψυχραῖσιν ἐπερχόμενος νεφέλαισιν·
 σὰς ποτε βακχευτῆς Βρόμιος διένειμεν ὀπώρας.

ἄφθιτον, ἀθανατον, ῥητὸν μόνον ἀθανάτοισιν.
 ἔλθε, μέγιστε θεῶν πάντων, κρατερῇ σὺν ἀνάγκῃ, 15
 φρικτός, ἀήττητος, μέγας, ἄφθιτος, ὃν στέφει αἰθήρ.⁷⁰³

Lord of the Heavens, of Hades, land, and sea,
 whose thunders shake Olympus' strong-built dome,
 whom daemons shuddering flee, and all the gods
 do fear, and Fates implacable obey.
 Eternal mother and eternal Sire,
 whose anger shakes the universal frame,
 awakes the stormy wind, veils all with clouds,
 and rends with sudden flash the expanse of heaven.
 At your command the stars their changeless course
 in order run. Before your fiery throne
 angels unwearied stand; whose only care
 is to perform your gracious will for man.
 Yours is the Spring new-decked with purple buds,
 the winter yours, with chilling clouds overcast,
 and yours Autumn with its merry vintage.
 Eternal, immortal, who can be spoken only by immortals.
 Come, greatest of all gods, with strong necessity,

⁷⁰³ Fr. 691 F (248 K.).

terrible, invincible, great, eternal, whom aether crowns.⁷⁰⁴

The first element that deserves our attention is the terminology which is used to describe the one god at the beginning of the fragment. This divine supremacy is presented through the image of the dominion over both the air and the underworld, on land and sea (‘Αἰθέρος ἥδ’ Αἴδου, πόντου γαίης τε τύρηννε’). This is not the first time we encounter this kind of image to describe Zeus’ supremacy. In the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* we discussed the figure of the theopantistic cosmic god who is part of the world (constituting its base and divine root)⁷⁰⁵ without fully identifying with it. This conception might be seen represented in the *Hymn to Zeus* in vertical terms through the images of the head and body, even though this uprightness might be considered as also ‘rounded’ since, as we noted, the description of the god echoes an idea of completeness and roundedness which could be interpreted as both temporal and spatial. Such a representation seems to recall the elements that we find in the Orphic fragment we are now analysing and matches with the theopantistic description of the Orphic one god, one of whose main features is his dominion over the entire *cosmos*. The association with the Underworld is also found in fragment 543 F (239 K.) we have previously examined, where the one divine entity is not only presented as the ruler of the Underworld but also identified with the chthonian god Hades: ‘Εἷς Ζεύς, εἷς Αἴδης, εἷς Ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος’.⁷⁰⁶

Another interesting term is to be found in the second line of the fragment where the god is described as ‘thunder-shaker’ (ὄς βρονταῖς σεΐεις). We have seen this kind of representation of Zeus in the *Hymn to Zeus* where the god was described as ἀργικέραυνος,⁷⁰⁷ ruler of the thunderbolt.

⁷⁰⁴ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 740 revised and edited by me.

⁷⁰⁵ See Bianchi 1975: 257.

⁷⁰⁶ Fr. 543 F (239 K.), 1.

⁷⁰⁷ Frr. 14 F, 1; 243 F (69+168 K.), 1.

The mention of Olympus' dome (Βριαρὸν δόμον Οὐλύμποιο) is a clear reference to the traditional Olympian pantheon and the one god that is here described presents features that characterise him in relation with the other gods and with the universe, in both a syncretistic and hierarchic way, both in synchronic and diachronic terms. We see here not only the importance of the relationship between Zeus and the *cosmos* ⁷⁰⁸ but also the relationship between the one god and the plurality of the other gods and divine entities. Demons (δαίμονες ὃν φρίσσουσι), and other gods (θεῶν δὲ δέδοικεν ὄμιλος) are mentioned here, all paying fearful respect to the one god.

At line 4 of the fragment we encounter the Μοῖραι, who are described as obedient servants of the one god. The appearance of the typical pagan figures of the Μοῖραι is relevant and reminds us of the *Hymn to Zeus* where the representation of Zeus as ἀρχός -beginning of all things and (new) starting point of history- is also stressed by the identification with fate/μοῖρα:⁷⁰⁹

[Ζεὺς πνοιὴ πάντων, Ζεὺς πάντων ἔπλετο] μοῖρα.⁷¹⁰

Zeus is the breath of all things, of all things is Zeus the fate.⁷¹¹

One of the features of this Orphic Zeus may therefore have been his control of time, both present and future: the juxtaposition with the personifications of destiny (the Μοῖραι) might thus have been inserted mainly to show also this aspect of the one henotheistic god.

At line 5 the god is defined as ἄφθιτε, 'eternal, indestructible' cosmic creator (repeated also at line 14)⁷¹² and μητροπάτωρ:

⁷⁰⁸ See Bianchi 1970 and 1975: 253-260.

⁷⁰⁹ Bernabé 2010a: 75.

⁷¹⁰ Fr. 14 F, 3.

⁷¹¹ My translation.

⁷¹² The stress is here on the eternal figure of the divinity who is described as a cosmic god, creator of all things, having no beginning and no end. The same adjective is found also in one of the *Orphic Hymns* addressed to Zeus: *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 1-2. Le Boulluec considers this term as one of the most significant related to other Orphic Hymns: "Quant au vocabulaire et aux thèmes, ce sont ceux des *Hymnes orphique* de la fin de la période

ἄφθιτε, μητροπάτωρ, οὗ θυμῷ πάντα δονεῖται.⁷¹³

Eternal mother and eternal Sire,
whose anger shakes the universal frame⁷¹⁴

This noun has strong links with other Greek sources, as Le Boulluec points out,⁷¹⁵ and the notion of Zeus being both male and female is found also in the *De mundo* version of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* we analysed in the first section:

Ζεὺς ἄρσιν γένετο, Ζεὺς ἄμβροτος ἔπλετο νύμφη⁷¹⁶
Zeus is a man, Zeus is an immortal maiden;⁷¹⁷

As we have previously noticed, this version of the hymn adds the characteristic of the one god assuming in himself both the sexes (male and female features). In being both male and female the god thus appears complete, embodying a sort of ‘fecundating’ symbol of fertility. This appears to be the same notion that is verifiable also in our fragment 691 F. Indeed, “l’emploi du terme μητροπάτωρ est propre au texte présent. Il indique que le dieu suprême est à la fois αὐτογενής, premier principe, et cause de tous les êtres”.⁷¹⁸ The one god is therefore presented as both mother and father, supreme and everlasting creator of everything. As Le Boulluec has remarked, this notion of a god being μητροπάτωρ is one of the ‘genuine’ Greek features that invite us to talk about a polytheistic nature of this fragment. The use of such a term can be explained by making reference to other Greek texts like the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* we have already quoted, and this terminology is also found in

hellénistique et du début de l’époque impériale” (Le Boulluec 1981: 350). The term might be found also in two other Orphic Hymns (*Orph. Hymn.* 10, 5; 83, 1) but the context appears to be different from the henotheistic one we are here analysing. See also Ricciardelli 2000: 48-49 and 299.

⁷¹³ Fr. 691 F (248 K.), 5.

⁷¹⁴ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 740 revised and edited by me.

⁷¹⁵ The author mentions, among others, Homer and Herodotus; Le Boulluec 1981: 350.

⁷¹⁶ Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 4.

⁷¹⁷ Transl. Thom 2014: 55.

⁷¹⁸ Le Boulluec 1981: 351.

other significant sources. Indeed, some scholars argue that “son origine stoïcienne a été démontrée”.⁷¹⁹

In a fragment ascribed to Diogenes of Babylon (disciple of Chrysippus) and collected by Von Arnim in the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* in the section dedicated to the ‘*physica*’ of the philosopher,⁷²⁰ Zeus is represented as both male and female.⁷²¹ On the relation between these texts and the notion, quite recurrent in ancient literature, of a one god absorbing both male and female features, Festugière has pointed out:

[Zeus] est dit ici père et mère des dieux. Or Diogène de Babylone (c. 240-152 av. J.C.) se livrant à des interprétations allégoriques dans le goût des Stoïciens – le monde est identique à Zeus ou contient Zeus comme l’homme son âme, Apollon est le soleil, Artémis la lune, etc. [...] La manière même dont, chez Diogène, sont amenées les citations [...] indique qu’il s’agit d’expressions connues, et la forme de la seconde citation, avec les deux Ζεύς répétés, alors qu’il eût été si simple d’écrire Ζεύς ἄρρην καὶ θῆλυς, prouve presque à l’évidence que Diogène songe bien au vers Ζεύς ἄρσιν γένετο, Ζεύς...νυμφή.⁷²²

The emphasis on the figure of the supreme god Zeus as father appeared also in fr. 416 (298 K.) we have previously analysed, in which Zeus is not only an orderly artisan but most of all a father, ‘πατήρ’, who generates all beings.⁷²³ I also noted how in other Stoic sources the divine figure was pictured as a rational being, a δημιουργόν, creator of the universe and, most of all, father of all things (πατέρα πάντων).⁷²⁴

Last but not least, it is highly noticeable that Proclus, in a fragment we have already examined, talks about Zeus in henotheistic as well as paternal and maternal terms. In one of the 10 sections⁷²⁵ dedicated to the analysis of the etymology of the name Zeus, describing the

⁷¹⁹ Le Boulluec 1981: 350.

⁷²⁰ SVF 3.II.27-37.

⁷²¹ SVF 3.II.33.

⁷²² Festugière 1954: 46.

⁷²³ Fr. 416 (298 K.), 4.

⁷²⁴ SVF 2.1021 = Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 7.147.

⁷²⁵ Procl. *In Cra.* 95-105.

god as Demiurge⁷²⁶ and quoting from Orpheus and Orphic sources,⁷²⁷ he describes Zeus as a supreme divine figure related to both motherhood and fatherhood (‘ή πατρική ἀγαθότης... πατρικῆς σύμβολον...μητρικῆς’). Such a diversified tradition of the use of the term μητροπάτωρ (and the ones related to the same semantic area, such as πατήρ, πατρικῆς and μητρικῆς, Ζεὺς ἄρρην καὶ θῆλυς, Ζεὺς ἄρσιν γένετο, Ζεὺς...νύμφη) associated to the description of a divinity represented in henotheistic terms, partly rooted in the Greek literary and philosophical background, therefore encourages me to consider it one example of a possible ‘genuine’ Greek polytheistic feature.

At lines 6-8, the god is presented as supreme ruler over natural phenomena such as winds, thunders, lightnings and storms, and dispenser of cosmic order (‘σὴ μὲν ἐν ἄστροις τάξις’).⁷²⁸ The presence of messengers or ‘angels’ (‘σῶι δὲ θρόνῳι πυρόεντι παρεστᾶσιν πολύμοχοι ἄγγελοι’)⁷²⁹ in the next passage of the fragment is often considered to be one mark of the Jewish influence on the text.⁷³⁰ However, these figures of divine entities and messengers are also found in pagan texts such as the *Chaldean Oracles*.⁷³¹ As Le Boulluec has noticed “l’influence a pu jouer dans l’autre sens, comme dans le cas, semble-t-il, de l’angélologie des *Oracles chaldaïques* au II siècle de notre ère”.⁷³²

In two fragments of the *Oracles* angelical figures appear and seem to refer to divine entities similar in status to the ones we encounter in our Orphic fragment.⁷³³ The image of

⁷²⁶ Procl. *In Cra.* 99.

⁷²⁷ Fr. 85 (122 K.).

⁷²⁸ Fr. 691 F (248 K.), 7-8.

⁷²⁹ Fr. 691 F (248 K.), 9-10.

⁷³⁰ “La présence et le rôle des anges au 9^e e 10^e vers évoquent des conceptions juives” (Le Boulluec 1981: 350). See also West 1983: 36; Bernabé 2005a: 250.

⁷³¹ West also mentions other texts, among which the *Carmen de viribus herbarum* (a hexametrical poem edited in Latin around the 10th-11th century CE) seems to be the most remarkable one. Indeed, the scholar points out that in that work 360 divine messengers are said to exist; similarly, “Orpheus is said to have recognised 365 deities” (West 1983: 36 n.108). See also Le Boulluec 1981: 350.

⁷³² Le Boulluec 1981: 350. The scholar also notices here that specific terms such as πολύμοχοι and φρικτός are also found in the *Orphic Hymns* and the two texts bear interesting similarities in this respect.

⁷³³ *Orac. Chald.* 137-138.

angelic messengers as divine figures might therefore be not only the result of Jewish influence, but also a reference to other similar pagan divine entities.⁷³⁴ In the case of our Orphic fragment, these entities may be supporting figures of the supreme god and appear to be part of the polytheistic structure of a henotheistic context. In henotheistic contexts other divine entities are indeed never denied; instead, their status is often changed in hierarchical terms and subordinated to the one supreme god. Other divine beings (ἄγγελοι, Μοῖραι, δαίμονες) are not, therefore, explicitly denied but rather highlighted even if because of their lower or different status represented here on an imaginary vertical axis in the wider divine organisation of henotheistic structures.

Lines 11-13 see a beautiful representation of the seasons as belonging to the supreme power of the one god:

σὸν μὲν ἔαρ λάμπει νέον ἄνθεσι πορφυρέοισιν·
 σὸς χειμὼν ψυχραῖσιν ἐπερχόμενος νεφέλαισιν·
 σὰς ποτε βακχευτῆς Βρόμιος διένειμεν ὀπώρας.⁷³⁵

Yours is the Spring new-decked with purple buds,
 the winter yours, with chilling clouds overcast,
 and yours Autumn with its merry vintage.⁷³⁶

The image of the seasons is new to this research: although we have seen many times the god related to cosmic elements and natural phenomena, it is the first time we see the appearance of the seasons as in relation with the supreme deity. However, the description of the seasons linked with the highest god may be compared to one significant other source, that is, the Clarian oracle as read in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁴ For further comments on the angelic orders and demons in the *Chaldean Oracles* see Majercick 1989: 13-14 and 193; Tonelli 1990: 306-308.

⁷³⁵ Fr. 691 F (248 K.), 11-13.

⁷³⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 740 revised and edited by me.

⁷³⁷ West 1983: 36; Bernabé 2005a: 251.

As we have seen,⁷³⁸ in the first book of the *Saturnalia* Macrobius describes the figure of Apollo as identified with the Sun, Liber and Dionysos⁷³⁹ and later cites Orpheus on the identification between the Sun and Dionysos,⁷⁴⁰ quoting from a Neoplatonic source possibly through Cornelius Labeo. After the passage we have looked at, the author mentions an oracle in which the supreme god is identified with Ἰαώ, Hades, Zeus and Liber/Sun/Apollo seen as different divine manifestations of the one god, depending on the seasons:

Huius versus auctoritas fundatur oraculo Apollinis Clarii, in quo aliud quoque nomen soli adicitur, qui in isdem sacris versibus inter cetera vocatur Ἰαώ. Nam consultus Apollo Clarius quis deorum habendus sit qui vocatur Ἰαώ, ita effatus est:

ὄργια μὲν δεδαῶτας ἐχρῆν νηπευθέα κεύθειν,
εἰ δ' ἄρα τοι παύρη σύνεσις καὶ νοῦς ἀλαπαδνός,
φράζεο τὸν πάντων ὕπατον θεὸν ἔμμεν Ἰαώ,
χείματι μὲν τ' Αἰδὴν, Δία εἵαρος ἀρχομένοιο,
Ἥελιον δὲ θέρευσ, μετροπώρου δ' ἄβρὸν Ἰαώ.

*Huius oraculi vim, numinis nominisque interpretationem, qua Liber pater et sol Ἰαώ significatur, exsecutus est Cornelius Labeo in libro cui titulus est de oraculo Apollinis Clarii.*⁷⁴¹

The warrant for this last line rests on an oracle of Apollo of Claros, wherein yet another name is given to the sun; which is called, within the space of the same sacred verses by several names, including that of Iao. For when Apollo of Claros was asked who among the gods was to be regarded as the god called Iao, he replied:

Those who have learned the *orgia* should hide the unsearchable secrets, but, if the understanding is small and the mind weak, then ponder this: that Iao is the supreme god of all gods; in winter, Hades; at spring's beginning, Zeus; the Sun in summer; and in autumn, the splendid Iao.

For the meaning of this oracle and for the explanation, of the deity and his name, which identifies Iao with Liber Pater and the sun, our authority is Cornelius Labeo in his book *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁸ See §3.3.

⁷³⁹ Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.18.1-11.

⁷⁴⁰ Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.18.17-18.

⁷⁴¹ Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.18.19-21.

⁷⁴² Transl. Davies 1969: 131.

West comments that in this oracle “the highest god Iao (=Yahweh) is said to be Hades in winter, Zeus in spring, Helios in summer, and in autumn Iao (read Iacchus, meaning Dionysus?)”.⁷⁴³ Marinone also observes that the term Ἰαώ “si ricollega all’ebraico Jah, Jahu, Jahveh”.⁷⁴⁴ Not only do we find the association with a supreme god with natural elements related to seasons, but this second oracular text is also placed next to an Orphic fragment previously analysed (543 F [239 K.]) and highly significant in terms of the analysis of Orphic henotheistic sources.

To conclude, our Orphic fragment ends with a very remarkable statement on the eternity and supremacy of the one god in highly pagan henotheistic terms:

ἄφθιτον, ἀθανατον, ῥητὸν μόνον ἀθανάτοισιν.
 ἔλθε, μέγιστε θεῶν πάντων, κρατερῇ σὺν ἀνάγκῃ,
 φρικτός, ἀήττητος, μέγας, ἄφθιτος, ὃν στέφει αἰθήρ.⁷⁴⁵

Eternal, immortal, who can be spoken only by immortals.
 Come, greatest of all gods, with strong necessity,
 terrible, invincible, great, eternal, whom aether crowns.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴³ West 1983: 36 n.108. On ‘Iao’ see also PGM V, 1-53.

⁷⁴⁴ Marinone 1967: 272 n.17. Davies 1969: 131 argues ‘perhaps a form of Jah’. See also Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 1.94. On the history of the term see among others Ganschietz 1914.

⁷⁴⁵ Fr. 691 F (248 K.), 14-16.

⁷⁴⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 740 revised and edited by me.

4. Henotheism in Orphic Intuitive Sources

4.1 The Collection of the *Orphic Hymns*

The collection known under the generic name of *Orphic Hymns* is composed of 87 hexametrical poems each addressed to a single divinity.⁷⁴⁷ The poems are preceded by a general (again hexametrical) invocation to the gods⁷⁴⁸ in which Orpheus urges Musaeus to make good use of the prayers he is about to teach him:

Μάνθανε δῆ, Μουσαῖε, θυηπολίην περὶ σεμνήν,
εὐχὴν, ἥ δὴ τοι προφερεστέρη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.⁷⁴⁹

Learn now, Mousaios, a mystical and most holy rite,
a prayer which surely excels all others.⁷⁵⁰

The scholarship is generally divided when it comes to dating and locating the origin of the collection.⁷⁵¹ While some hypothesise an Egyptian background, it is now common opinion that the hymns were collected in Asia Minor.⁷⁵² Otto Kern, for example, was particularly convinced of the fact that the collection was the book of a Dionysian association based in Pergamum.⁷⁵³ As for the date of the *Hymns*, the chronology oscillates from the 2nd century BCE until the 5th century CE, mostly depending on the diverse philosophical influences (Stoic, Neoplatonic) which are taken into consideration to date the collection. Many features,

⁷⁴⁷ For an introduction to the *Orphic Hymns* see Guthrie 1935: 257-261; Quandt 1955: 3*-45*; Ricciardelli 2000: xiii-xlvi; Morand 2001; Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: ix-xxi. On the Greek hymns as a genre see Bremer 1981.

⁷⁴⁸ On the 'proemium' of the *Hymns* see, among others, West 1968: 288-289.

⁷⁴⁹ *Orph. Hymn. Pr.* 1-2.

⁷⁵⁰ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 3 revised and edited by me.

⁷⁵¹ For an introduction to the debate on the place and time of the collection see Ricciardelli 2000: xxviii-xxx; Morand 2001: 197-199.

⁷⁵² Quandt 1955: 44*.

⁷⁵³ See Kern 1910 and 1911. Athanassakis and Wolkow also stress the Eastern elements, observing how divinities such as Misa, Hipta and Melinoe were less known on the mainland (Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: x).

however, encourage scholars to date the hymns to around the 2nd-3rd century CE.⁷⁵⁴ In the introduction to their edition of the *Orphic Hymns* Athanassakis and Wolkow observe that the language and refined style of the hexameters may point towards the early centuries CE and set a possible terminus *post quem* around 200 CE thanks to a possible reference to Ptolemy's *Harmonics*.⁷⁵⁵ A possible background for its composition might therefore be the atmosphere of religious innovation flourishing during the Severan dynasty (193-235 CE) in which Eastern ideas and influences seemed to have been quite strong and mystery cults (such as the Dionysian ones) appear to have had a sort of revival.⁷⁵⁶

The main core of the collection is usually written with a *Du-stil*, that is a direct invocation to the god referring to him/her with diverse and various epithets.⁷⁵⁷ However, as has been observed, there is a noticeable shift between subjects in the Hymns: the 'I' referring to Orpheus (such as in the prologue) later becomes the 'I' of the person who addresses his/her prayers to the gods (the *orans*) and even later that of a community or a restricted group of people.⁷⁵⁸ As Morand noticed "the confusing identity of the 'I' sets all the elements in place for the *orans* to feel that he is re-enacting the song once performed by Orpheus".⁷⁵⁹ These comments support some observations that I will make about the role of the Orphic component in this collection and in our sources in general. My aim in this research is also to analyse to what extent we can talk about Orphic features in the sources I am analysing. The literary strategies that lie behind the Orphic elements of our sources have to be carefully analysed and evaluated in relation to the effective role played by supposedly 'Orphic'

⁷⁵⁴ See Ricciardelli 2000: xxx-xxxi. The fact that the *Hymns* are first quoted by Iohannes Diaconus Galenus (9th-10th century CE) is also another element in favour of the 'late' chronology. See also Quandt 1955: 3*; West 1983: 35 ff; Ricciardelli 2000: xxxi; Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: ix-xi.

⁷⁵⁵ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: x. The passage which may refer to the *Harmonics* is *Hymn* 34 to Apollo, lines 16-23.

⁷⁵⁶ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: x-xi.

⁷⁵⁷ On the genre of the *Hymns* see Morand 2001: 39-75.

⁷⁵⁸ Morand 2015: 212-213. See also Morand 2001: 90-94 and Herrero 2015.

⁷⁵⁹ Morand 2015: 213.

worshippers. In other words, I will try to understand if we can talk about Orphic religious elements in the *Orphic Hymns* (as I have done with other sources) and how they are related to external influences and to elements typical of their context of composition. All that we know, so far, is that the attribution of the collection to the singer and *theologos* Orpheus allows the reader to place the hymns in a distant and legendary past of the heroic age, under a sort of divine inspiration and in a mystery ritual frame.⁷⁶⁰ The worshippers that sing these hymns which ‘excel all others’ seem to trust in traditional Orphic wisdom in order to obtain the favour of the gods. In doing this, the initiatory element is both stressed and mitigated: on the one hand the expressions are typical of the mystery formulation, but on the other they seem to be accessible to many mortals (interested in getting in contact with the divine) throughout the text.⁷⁶¹

Back to the introduction to the formal structure of the hymns: most of them end with a more or less general request to the divinity such as health, wealth or glory. As for the epithets, Gabriella Ricciardelli has interestingly observed an apparent lack of ‘epic’ in the *Hymns*. Indeed, while in the *Homeric Hymns* the gods are many times represented through mythological episodes and the narration of heroic endeavours, the *Orphic Hymns* seem to substitute these accounts with the description of the power of the gods through imaginative and evocative epithets (πολυωνυμία).⁷⁶² This strategy might have been useful to the worshipper not only to display the many ἀρεταί and τιμαί of the gods, but also to get in closer contact with the divine pantheon in a more intimate and effective way, making clear all the exceptional divine prerogatives of the god in question.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶⁰ Herrero 2015: 230.

⁷⁶¹ Herrero 2015: 236-237.

⁷⁶² Ricciardelli 2000: xxxii-xxxiii.

⁷⁶³ Ricciardelli 2000: xxxiii.

William Guthrie has observed that these epithets should be regarded as worthy of being considered as words of the utmost importance.⁷⁶⁴ Indeed, as we shall see in the analyses of the single ‘henotheistic’ hymns, they seem to convey specific conceptions of the divinities and partly appear to do that in order to obtain the maximum efficacy for the cult. It is therefore important to analyse them focusing on their peculiarities, distinctive traits and ‘appropriateness’ to the single divinity⁷⁶⁵ but also on the greater picture and their complementarity. We will also take into consideration the diverse chronological backgrounds of the hymns, and the fact that many of them were versified in an era in which syncretism was slowly starting to make inroads. Every single epithet should thus be taken into consideration also with regards to its single individual significance for a specific deity or, on the contrary, its blending features.⁷⁶⁶ Talking about the importance of epithets in the *Hymns*, Athanassakis and Wolkow stress the relevance of “the power of clustering epithets for the creation of an emotional and physical crescendo that might raise our human spirit and help us approach the divine”.⁷⁶⁷

As we have already noted the origin of the collection still remains unclear, but scholars now tend to agree in considering it a liturgical book of a religious cult society, attributed to Orpheus.⁷⁶⁸ The hymns present many ritual features such as the initial indication of the fragrance to burn or the specific requests to the gods even though we do not know whether they were composed by (and for) a specific society or if they were taken from an already existing corpus. Scholarship has indeed shown that these hymns were probably partly

⁷⁶⁴ Guthrie 1930.

⁷⁶⁵ Guthrie 1930: 217.

⁷⁶⁶ Guthrie 1930: 216-217.

⁷⁶⁷ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: xx. The authors also propose an interesting parallel between the clusters of epithets in the *Hymns* and those present in Hesiod’s catalogue of the daughters of Nereus and Okeanos (*Theog.* 240-264 and 337-370) and that of the Nereids in Homer (*Il.* 18, 39-49).

⁷⁶⁸ One of the first to be of this opinion was Dieterich (Dieterich 1911: 86).

actually sung or recited by a religious community thus representing a more ‘intuitive’ context of worshipping.⁷⁶⁹

Fritz Graf proposes a reading of the hymns which integrates the strict ‘literary’ interpretation of the collection with the stress on the ritual element. He suggests that the sequence of hymns may also be read as a nocturnal (initiator) ritual opened with an invocation to Night and closed with the one to Dawn.⁷⁷⁰ This ritual might have corresponded to an actual liturgy performed by the cult community, and Graf underlines two main anomalies which may point towards this hypothesis. The first of these anomalies is represented by the structure of the hymns which, as Morand has also observed,⁷⁷¹ change the usual *invocatio-argumentum-preces* in favour of a predominant *invocatio*. This may be due to the fact that the invocation would be enough for the initiate (and not a ‘common’ worshipper) to establish the relationship with the divinity. The second anomaly is represented by the fact that the requests are often general rather than specific (as in normal prayers): something which may point towards a general welfare of the liturgical group and the mystery community.⁷⁷² Even though I would be careful in establishing a close correspondence between the sequence of the *Orphic Hymns* and an actual nocturnal liturgy, I agree with Graf when he tries to unearth the liturgical elements of the *Hymns* to show their link with the ritual aspects present in the collection, though certainly mediated by the literary filter and by a certain degree of reflection. At the same time, in fact, the collection has surely been re-elaborated by priests/members of a community or by scholars and has

⁷⁶⁹ On the main features and functions of the collection used originally by a community and the main bibliographical references of the scholarly debate see Ricciardelli 2000: xxxiv-xxxvii. See also Guthrie 1935: 258-259 and Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: xiii, xvi-xvii.

⁷⁷⁰ The hymn-sequence would thus reflect not only Orphic mythology and theogony but also liturgy: see Graf 2009. See also Morand 2015: 214.

⁷⁷¹ Morand 2001.

⁷⁷² “Far from being only the songs that accompanied the *tryphé* of a bacchic social event, the hymns point to the emotional complexity and seriousness of Bacchic mystery cults” (Graf 2009: 182).

undergone a certain degree of literary manipulation. The fact that most of the hymns we are going to analyse contain many references to a precedent tradition of Orphic texts which in turn are imbued with Stoic elements and Platonic cross-references allow us to place this collection in our analysis of the status and transmission of Orphic henotheistic sources.

Following Furley's analysis of praise and persuasion in Greek Hymns (such as the *Homeric Hymns*, *Orphic Hymns*, Callimachus, Magical Papyri and others),⁷⁷³ it is indeed possible to identify some common elements in hymnic narrative, traceable also to our *Orphic Hymns*.⁷⁷⁴ In fact, many hymns appear to present recurrent features: the request to the god to assist the rite, the reference to the very performance while it is happening, the list of mythological attributes (epithets) or narratives aimed at obtaining the god's benevolence. All these elements, though conveyed in different ways and literary forms, seem to aspire to "link human performance with divine power".⁷⁷⁵ Indeed, as Furley points out in his conclusions, it seems relevant to try to identify "the underlining unity of purpose which characterizes these sacred texts, from honorific invocation through mythical narrative to direct appeal for help at the end. [...] We must not lose sight of what the Greeks *thought* they were offering the gods through sacrifice. Their hymns show more clearly than their rituals that worship entailed subtle and linguistically refined communication with deities, whose real efficacy was taken for granted by the worshippers".⁷⁷⁶ I agree with Furley when he identifies a possible underlying unity in these sacred texts, and I also find interesting his observation that we may be able to analyse the Greeks' refined communication through these hymns. These texts have undergone a certain degree of reflection and literary manipulation, and it therefore seems right to place the sphere of belief and that of rite close to one another as Furley does.

⁷⁷³ Furley 1995.

⁷⁷⁴ For an introduction to the religious role of poetic forms (including hymns) and the role played by literary evidence in the study and understanding of ancient Greek Religion see Gagné 2015.

⁷⁷⁵ Furley 1995: 40.

⁷⁷⁶ Furley 1995: 45.

I embrace this focus on the texts of the *Orphic Hymns* as a valuable testimony of both the intuitive and more reflective side of the henotheistic manifestation, although I would hesitate to claim that we are able to see how the Greeks thought through our *Orphic Hymns*.⁷⁷⁷ Indeed, Furley stresses the importance of focusing not only on the ritual, actions and deeds, but also on “the belief in, or profound cogitation on, aspects of the sacred”.⁷⁷⁸

Back to the text of the *Orphic Hymns*: the main divinity seems to be Dionysos, as the 8 hymns dedicated to him and the figure of the βουκόλος may indicate. Scholarship often stresses the role of this figure in Dionysian cult societies –sort of ministers- typical of Hellenistic and later Imperial times.⁷⁷⁹ Scholarship appears, however, to be still divided on the true Orphic nature of the collection. Cumont, for example, considers the absence of typical and fundamental Orphic elements (such as indications about the afterlife or prescriptions for a true ὀρφικὸς βίος) the sign of the disappearance of Orphic cults in the 2nd-3rd century.⁷⁸⁰

Some of our ancient sources which refer to ‘Orphic Hymns’ appear to make reference to Orphic poetry (perhaps oral?)⁷⁸¹ attributed to Orpheus in general and not to our specific collection. These sources, which are however very significant to the aims of my research, include Plato’s *Laws*:

ὅσοι δὲ ἀγαθοὶ τε αὐτοὶ καὶ τίμιοι ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἔργων ὄντες δημιουργοὶ καλῶν, τὰ τῶν τοιούτων ἄδέσθω ποιήματα, ἐὰν καὶ μὴ μουσικὰ πεφύκη. κρίσις δὲ αὐτῶν ἔστω παρὰ τε τῷ παιδευτῇ [...] μηδέ τινα τολμᾶν ἄδειν ἀδόκιμον μοῦσαν μὴ κρινάντων τῶν νομοφυλάκων, μηδ’ ἂν ἡδίων ἢ τῶν θαμύρου τε καὶ Ὀρφείων ὕμνων [...].⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁷ Furley also states that “such a study highlights both the hymns-writer’s concept of the god(ess) address and his own attempt to win the deity’s favour by effective speech” (Furley 1995: 30).

⁷⁷⁸ Furley 1995: 31.

⁷⁷⁹ *Orph. Hymn.* 1, 10; 31, 7. See Dieterich 1911: 70-78; Ricciardelli 2000: xxiv-xxvii (esp. xxvi n.1).

⁷⁸⁰ Cumont 1949: 247.

⁷⁸¹ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: x-xi.

⁷⁸² *Pl. Leg.* 829d-e.

No, those who are themselves good, well respected in the city, the architects of fine deeds – they are the ones whose compositions shall be sung, even if they lack something in musicality. The selection shall be in the hands of the educator [...] nor is anyone to have the temerity to sing music which has failed this test, and has not been authorised by the guardians of the law, even if it be sweeter than the hymns of Thamyras or Orpheus [...].⁷⁸³

And, secondly, Pausanias, who refers to the ‘hymns of Orpheus’⁷⁸⁴ during his description of Boiotia in the 9th book of his guide to Greece:

ὅστις δὲ περὶ ποιήσεως ἐπολυπραγμόνησεν ἤδη, τοὺς Ὀρφέως ὕμνους οἶδεν ὄντας ἕκαστόν τε αὐτῶν ἐπὶ βραχύτατον καὶ τὸ σύμπαν οὐκ ἐς ἀριθμὸν πολὺν πεποιημένους· Λυκομίδαί δὲ ἴσασι τε καὶ ἐπάδουσι τοῖς δρωμένοις. κόσμῳ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἐπῶν δευτερεῖα φέροντο ἂν μετὰ γε Ὀμήρου τοὺς ὕμνους, τιμῆς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐς πλεόν ἐκείνων ἤκουσι.⁷⁸⁵

Anyone who has already made a serious study of poetry knows the hymns of Orpheus are all extremely short, and even if you take them together not numerous. The Lykomidai know them and sing them at their mysteries. These beautiful verses are second only to the hymns of Homer, and even more honoured by the gods.⁷⁸⁶

Guthrie is of the same opinion as Cumont, arguing that worshippers making use of these liturgical texts did not have in mind the original Orphic doctrine but a faded version of it, confused with other cults that were spread in the Graeco-Roman world.⁷⁸⁷ However, despite these observations, it does not seem fair to me to dismiss such an important Orphic testimony as a mere shadow of the old splendour of the Orphic tradition. Even if it is true that the *Orphic Hymns* represent late evidence of Orphic ritual prescriptions and influence, it is important to analyse them as a valuable testimony of Orphic religious significance and its

⁷⁸³ Transl. Schofield-Griffith 2016: 294.

⁷⁸⁴ In his notes to the text the English translator Levi also comments that “the body of Orphic hymns which has survived is Hadrianic at the earliest: it was evidently not yet current when Pausanias wrote” (Levi 1971a: 374).

⁷⁸⁵ Paus. *Perieg.* 9.30.12.

⁷⁸⁶ Transl. Levi 1971a: 373-374. This passage is only the end of a quite long *excursus* dedicated to the figure of Orpheus (Paus. *Perieg.* 9.30.9-12).

⁷⁸⁷ Guthrie 1935: 259.

development throughout the centuries. Indeed, the cult society that lies behind the *Orphic Hymns* identifies Orpheus during that rite as its patron and protector, and refuses traditional sacrifice giving preference to the burning of aromatic plants. Furthermore, the religious value of this collection as an invaluable testimony to the role and status of the gods in late paganism should not be underestimated.⁷⁸⁸ These observations have also been followed by Athanassakis and Wolkow, who also convince me of the religious relevance of our *Orphic Hymns*. In opposition to Lobeck's view of the Hymns being merely a literary document,⁷⁸⁹ they stress that the texts used by the worshippers in their rites "are interesting not so much as poetry but as repositories of religious ideas, frequently borrowed from a wide range of older literature and expressed by a means peculiar to a category of the hymnic genre".⁷⁹⁰

Introducing the chapter on Orphic cosmogony of her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Jane Harrison describes in detail the gods of the *Orphic Hymns*, set in an atmosphere of 'mystical monotheism' and far from the clearly distinguished 'departmental' gods of the Olympian tradition. Indeed, Harrison comments that "the several gods by this time are all really one, and this one god is mystically conceived as a potency (δαίμων) rather than a personal divinity (θεός)".⁷⁹¹ I agree with Harrison's comments when she stresses the importance of underlining the difference between traditional Olympian gods and the 'late' Orphic ones. In fact, there is indeed a distance between the 'departmental' gods typical of the traditional theogonies and the peculiar deities which emerge from late pagan texts such as the *Orphic Hymns*. As we shall soon see, I am inclined to define some of them as 'henotheistic', since they embody a phenomenon of extraction from the many or, on the other hand, of absorption of other divine features.

⁷⁸⁸ See Ricciardelli 2000: xxxvii.

⁷⁸⁹ Which also Dieterich 1911 opposed.

⁷⁹⁰ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: xiii.

⁷⁹¹ Harrison 1903: 624.

However, I would not agree with Harrison's use of strong terms such as 'mystical' and 'monotheistic', and on a sharp distinction between traditional gods and Orphic ones. We are still talking about a pagan polytheistic background and it does not do justice to a historical and cultural analysis of the sources to separate these late Orphic gods from the old polytheistic system. It is surely correct to stress changes and developments, but always making use of an analogical perspective, trying to take into consideration differences but also similarities and affinities. This is why I tend not to embrace the author's view on the background of the *Hymns*' composition. The risk of Harrison's approach might be to unify all the old polytheistic divinities under one undifferentiated god influenced by a widespread 'mystical monotheism':

By the date of the 'Hymns' monotheism was of course in some degree the common property of all educated minds, and cannot therefore be claimed as distinctive of Orphism. Wholly Orphic, however, is the mystical joy with which the Hymns brim over [...]. It would therefore be idle to examine the Orphic Hymns severally and in detail, in order to extract from them the Orphic characteristics of each particular god. Any one who reads them through will speedily be conscious that, save for the *proemium*, and an occasional stereotyped epithet, it would usually be impossible to determine which hymn was addressed to what god. With whatever attempt at individualization they begin, the poet is soon safe away into a mystical monotheism.⁷⁹²

It appears to me that Harrison goes too far when she argues that it is not possible to identify individual gods in the *Orphic Hymns*. On the contrary, even though the late Orphic gods present peculiar but also blurred features, I believe it to be possible to trace different and distinct gods. As Morand has shown, it is possible to extrapolate different gods also turning to the analysis of the epithets, genealogies and epigraphic evidence.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹² Harrison 1903: 625.

⁷⁹³ See Morand 2001: 197-198. In her chapter on 'Les Dieux' (Morand 2001: 153-199) she takes into consideration deities such as Titan, Paian, Protogonos, Eubouleus, Hipta, Melinoe and Erikepaïos.

The aim of this chapter will therefore be to analyse different deities to determine which ones present similarities and differences with the gods of the traditional pantheon and which ones emerge from the plurality of this pantheon with specific and peculiar features of unity or – to some extent- uniqueness. I will do it always bearing in mind the importance of this collection of hymns as a versification and re-elaboration of a cultural and religious heritage rooted in an original intuitive context.⁷⁹⁴ Indeed, I would like to examine selected *Orphic Hymns* as a valuable testimony of a henotheistic cult expression of the relationship with the divine, mediated by the literary filter of the hymnic genre.⁷⁹⁵

4.2 *Orphic Hymn 15*

The first hymn of the collection I would like to analyse is number 15 addressed to Zeus. Here the divinity is described mainly as creator of the world, beginning and end of all things and supreme ruler of natural things (for the full text of the hymn please refer to the Appendix – Item 26). We can notice right from the beginning of the hymn a formal feature typical of this collection, in which the worshipper proclaims “the nature of the god only through the utterance of his/her names, titles, and epithets, without any need of a logical or narrative explanation of why the god(dess) deserves them”.⁷⁹⁶ The text starts with the repetition of the name Zeus (the invocation Ζεῦ) which is repeated also later on in the course of the hymn.⁷⁹⁷ We may note that this anaphora of the name of the divinity is also found in the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*, thus creating a possible relation between the two texts.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁴ Morand 2001: 34.

⁷⁹⁵ See Furley 1995: 30.

⁷⁹⁶ Herrero 2015: 238.

⁷⁹⁷ “Le nom de la divinité est parfois simplement répété, ce qui donne à l’hymne un caractère incantatoire” (Morand 2001: 60).

⁷⁹⁸ See for example fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1-5.

Proceeding with the analysis, Quandt comments that the third verse might be associated with Stoic doctrine⁷⁹⁹ and proposes a comparison between this verse and fragment 416 (298 K.), as well as a passage of the treatise, *De mundo*.⁸⁰⁰ In our *Orphic Hymn* 15 we read:

ὦ βασιλεῦ, διὰ σὴν κεφαλὴν ἐφάνη τάδε θεῖα⁸⁰¹

O king, through your head you have brought to light divine works⁸⁰²

While in fragment 416 (298 K.), belonging to the lost Orphic Μικρότερος Κρατήρ (Shorter Krater) and cited only by Johannes Diaconus Galenus' *Allegoriae in Hesiodi Theogoniam*, we read:⁸⁰³

ἔστιν δὴ πάντων ἀρχὴ Ζεύς. ζῆν γὰρ ἔδωκε
ζῶια τ' ἐγέννησεν καὶ Ζῆν' αὐτὸν καλέουσι
καὶ Δία τῆιδ', ὅτι δὴ διὰ τοῦτον ἅπαντα τέτυκται.⁸⁰⁴

Zeus is the origin of all things. Indeed, he donated life
and generated living beings and they call him Ζῆνα
and Δία for this reason, since because of that all things were generated.⁸⁰⁵

Zeus is presented in both texts with analogous features. Indeed, the divine figure pictured in these passages is represented as creator of the universe, and the texts also provide the reader with an etymology of the name Zeus (explicit in fr. 416, more implicit in the *Orphic Hymn*) where the name (and its origin) is strictly related to the fact that he is the vivifying giver of life and creator. The generative role of Zeus is therefore one of the main features of the first lines of this hymn, in which his creative activity is seen also as a mental activity (διὰ σὴν κεφαλὴν). This is a significant aspect I have also analysed with regard to the *Orphic Hymn* to

⁷⁹⁹ “Versus Stoicorum doctrinam videtur indicare” (Quandt 1955: 15).

⁸⁰⁰ “cf. Orph. Fr. 298, ubi a Kernio plura testimonia allata sunt, quibus addas Ps. Arist. De mundo 7 p. 401a 13” (Quandt 1955: 15).

⁸⁰¹ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 3.

⁸⁰² Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 16 revised and edited by me.

⁸⁰³ See my analysis in §3.2.

⁸⁰⁴ Fr. 416 (298 K.), 1-4.

⁸⁰⁵ My translation.

Zeus, where we see the representation of the *voũç* of the god.⁸⁰⁶ Indeed, it is in the head of Zeus that resides his intellect, there identified with the immortal ether, origin and orderly fundament of all *cosmos*. Such a depiction of the god is interestingly found in Stoic sources as well.⁸⁰⁷

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, I would link these features to the Stoic doctrine on the divine which we have found for example in Chrysippus, who portrays the divine as father of all beings, demiurge and vivifying divine figure.⁸⁰⁸ I have been able, indeed, to trace a centripetal, syncretic tendency in this source, where a religious and philosophical reflection is offered on the status of a god who noticeably absorbs many attributes of other divine figures. Though I do not see in our *Orphic Hymn* 15 an explicit reference to a syncretistic tendency, we will see how the features of a creator and all-pervading god are very much present in the hymn. The comparison with fragment 416 (298 K.) and the Stoics may help us cast light on the religious and literary influences of this hymn. On the relation between fragment 416 and the Stoics we have seen that Lobeck commented “quam interpretationem sive Orpheus a Chrysippo mutuatus est [...] sive Stoicorum princeps Orpheo suo abstulit, neutri invidemus”.⁸⁰⁹ This quotation is interesting since it expresses the core of our problem: to what extent can we consider our source ‘properly’ Orphic? And how can we analyse and define mutual influences? A certain echo between the two reflective sources (fr. 416 and Chrysippus’ fragments) and the first verses of *Orphic Hymn* 15 is undeniable, as they seem to share a similar henotheistic view on the god Zeus as main creative figure. I will soon clarify why I think it is also possible to talk about a ‘henotheistic’ view of the divine in this hymn. What I would like to stress here is that the speculation made by the philosophers we

⁸⁰⁶ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 17-21.

⁸⁰⁷ Such as SVF 2.580, 642, 1061, 1067, 1077.

⁸⁰⁸ SVF 2. 305, 1021 = Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 7.147-148; SVF 2.312, 1062 = Stob. *Eclog.* 1.26. The figure of Zeus as the one vivifying god who donates life to all beings is noticeably found also in Plato’s *Cratylus* (Pl. *Cra.* 396 a-b) and Proclus (Procl. *In Cra.* 99,101).

⁸⁰⁹ Lobeck 1829: 735-6.

have quoted (Chrysippus, Plato and later Proclus) about some specific terms and concepts present many analogies with our Orphic henotheistic fragments, these concepts being the name of Zeus as mark of his role of first creator (ἀρχή, as we will also read later in our *Hymn* 15) and donor of life to all things.

The last source I would like to draw a parallel with, given its importance with regard to the Stoic influence on the Orphic henotheistic texts, is Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*.⁸¹⁰ As has been observed by scholarship, in all these sources the status of Zeus is presented in terms of power manifested through the range of its creative activity:⁸¹¹

Σοὶ δὴ πᾶς ὅδε κόσμος ἐλίσσόμενος περὶ γαῖαν
 πείθεται ἢ κεν ἄγῃς, καὶ ἐκὼν ὑπὸ σεῖο κρατεῖται·
 τοῖον ἔχεις ὑποεργὸν ἀνικήμενόν ὑπὸ χερσίν
 ἀμφὴκη πυρόεντα αἰεζώνοντα κεραυνόν·
 τοῦ γὰρ ὑπὸ πληγῆς φύσεως πάντ' ἔργα ...
 ᾧ σὺ κατευθύνεις κοινὸν λόγον, ὃς διὰ πάντων
 φοιτᾷ μειγνύμενος μεγάλῳ μικροῖς τε φάεσσι
 τῶς τόσος τε γεγαῶς ὕπατος βασιλεὺς διὰ παντός.
 Οὐδέ τι γίγνεται ἔργον ἐπὶ χθονὶ σοῦ δίχα, δαῖμον,
 οὔτε κατ' αἰθέριον θεῖον πόλον οὔτ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ⁸¹²

This whole universe, spinning around the earth, truly
 obeys you wherever you lead, and is readily ruled by you;
 such a servant do you have between your unconquerable hands,
 the two-edged, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt.
 For by its stroke all works of nature <are guided>.
 With it you direct the universal reason, which permeates
 everything, mingling with the great and the small lights.
 Because of this you are so great, the highest king for ever.
 not a single deed takes place on earth without you, God,

⁸¹⁰ The hymn is attributed to Cleanthes of Assos, second head of the Stoa after the death of Zeno in 262/1 BCE. The text appears to be a poetic expression of Stoic philosophical ideas concerning the truths around the divinity as active principle of (and in) the universe. For an introduction to the *Hymn* see Thom 2005.

⁸¹¹ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 106.

⁸¹² Cleant. *Hymn*, 7-16.

nor in the divine celestial sphere nor in the sea⁸¹³

The passage I would like to draw our attention to is the last two lines, where the god is pictured as dominating the whole *cosmos*, both sky and sea. The influence of the Stoic conception of the divinity, present in the world in a sort of immanentistic way, is noticeable in our Orphic source(s). Thom observes how in this extract from the Stoic *Hymn to Zeus* we first meet “the reference to the earth [...]. The elaborate circumlocution for heaven (αἰθέριον θεῖον πόντον) serves to remind us that the heavens are the most perfect example of the obedience to the divine will to be found in the universe”.⁸¹⁴ I would like to take one step further, observing that (if not a direct parallel) we can find the same focus on earth first, and on the divine heaven after, in our *Orphic Hymn* 15:

ὦ βασιλεῦ, διὰ σὴν κεφαλὴν ἐφάνη τάδε θεῖα,
γαῖα θεὰ μήτηρ ὀρέων θ' ὑψηχέες ὄχθοι
καὶ πόντος καὶ πάνθ', ὅπως οὐρανὸς ἐντὸς ἔταξε⁸¹⁵

O king, through your head you have brought to light divine works
Earth, goddess and mother, the hills swept by the shrill winds,
the sea and the host of the stars, marshaled by the sky.⁸¹⁶

However, working on analogies made by similarities and differences, we can also observe how in our *Orphic Hymn* the fact that Zeus rules over the world is described in terms of ‘having brought to light’. This might indeed also make reference to an Orphic theogony, according to which the god swallows Protogonos and the entire world, giving new birth to the *cosmos* and to history.⁸¹⁷ I am therefore tempted to see in lines 3-5 of our *Orphic Hymn* 15 a Stoic influence but also the remains of an Orphic traditional heritage, taken from a literary corpus still circulating in the first centuries CE though probably mixed with other religious

⁸¹³ Transl. Thom 2005: 40.

⁸¹⁴ Thom 2005: 93-94.

⁸¹⁵ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 3-5.

⁸¹⁶ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 16 revised and edited by me.

⁸¹⁷ See Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 106 and my analysis of the *Hymn to Zeus* in §3.1.

streams. Indeed, though it is not possible to state to what extent the authors of these sources are aware of the implications of the terms they are using to describe the god, it is still important to note how the terminology appears to be close to the one we have encountered in the Orphic fragment 416. The relation between these texts cannot go unnoticed and our Orphic hymn, although probably belonging originally to an intuitive context of prayer, has clearly picked up something from this ‘stoicizing’ tradition in these first verses.

Lines 4-6 show statements about the world created by Zeus,⁸¹⁸ while the 7th verse contains an extremely important passage, fundamental to the aim of this research:

παντογένεθλ', ἀρχὴ πάντων πάντων τε τελευτή,⁸¹⁹

father of all, beginning and end of all⁸²⁰

As Quandt and Ricciardelli have pointed out, the expression ‘ἀρχὴ πάντων πάντων τε τελευτή’ clearly resembles the famous lines of the *Hymn to Zeus* I have analysed in the previous chapter:⁸²¹

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένητο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀργικέραυνος⁸²²

Zeus was born first, Zeus is last, ruler of the thunderbolt;⁸²³

This first verse is shared by the first three versions of the *Hymn to Zeus*⁸²⁴ and can thus be considered one of the fixed *formulae* of the hymn which constitute its main core. As Bernabé has pointed out, one of the fundamental ideas of these first three versions is the

⁸¹⁸ Ricciardelli draws parallels with other Orphic fragments (such as fr. 241 F [167 K.]) in which Zeus swallows Protogonos and embraces everything thus creating all things; see Ricciardelli 2000: 298-299.

⁸¹⁹ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 7.

⁸²⁰ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 17 revised and edited by me.

⁸²¹ “Hymnus Orphicus in Iovem conclamatissimus (Orph. Fr. 21a) incipit Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένητο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος” (Quandt 1955: 16). See also Ricciardelli 2000: 300-301.

⁸²² Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 1 = fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1.

⁸²³ My translation.

⁸²⁴ Frr. 14 F, 31 F (21-21a K.) and 243 F (69+168 K.).

representation of Zeus as ἀρχός of all things.⁸²⁵ One of the main focuses of the hymn is thus on the figure of Zeus as a one god who appears to be ἀρχός, monarch and beginning of all things, but also centre and totality of the universe.⁸²⁶ Indeed, a passage from the *Rhapsodies* version also resembles the terminology used in our *Orphic Hymn* 15:

Zeὺς βασιλεύς, Zeὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος.
 ἔν κράτος, εἷς δαίμων, γενέτης μέγας, ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων⁸²⁷
 Zeus sovereign, Zeus alone first cause of all:
 One power divine, great ruler of the world⁸²⁸

As analysed in the previous chapter, the description of the one god in terms of first and last, beginning and end of all things might be initially seen as a series of apparently paradoxical statements. The paradox, however, is only apparent since they may be considered as a confirmation of what I have previously defined as a genuinely Orphic theopantistic conception of the divinity.⁸²⁹ The formula expresses a kind of completeness and roundedness both temporal and spatial, making Zeus a tangible and metaphorical foundation of reality, both transcendent and immanent. According to what I have defined as the Orphic ‘cosmic god’, in fact, the divinity constitutes the root of all things but at the same time transcends them without fully identifying with them as in ‘pure’ pantheistic conceptions.⁸³⁰ These observations are developed also by Morand who points out this stress on the concept (and representation) of the opposites in the *Orphic Hymns* and more generally in other Orphic texts:

⁸²⁵ Bernabé 2010a: 79-94.

⁸²⁶ “Dans le poème orphique, Zeus qui a avalé le Premier-né et qui redonne naissance à l’univers, est à la fois le premier et le dernier, le début et la fin de toutes choses. Il est aussi, plus littéralement, à la fois le dernier de la génération précédente puisqu’il rest seul après avoir tout ingurgité et le premier de cette nouvelle descendance à laquelle il donne le jour” (Jourdan 2003: 17 n.2).

⁸²⁷ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 5-6.

⁸²⁸ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me.

⁸²⁹ See §1.5 and §3.1.

⁸³⁰ See Bianchi 1975: 257.

La complétude divine est parfois exprimée en termes de début et fin [...] Dans la plupart des cas, l'expression polaire [...] ne saurait se résoudre. La compréhension doit jaillir de l'opposition elle-même. C'est une manière de dire l'inexprimable au sujet de la divinité qui justement est 'dite et non dite'. Ces oppositions expriment à nouveau la complétude et sont des formes primitives d'oxymores.⁸³¹

It is therefore extremely interesting to notice how this theopantistic image of Zeus as beginning and end of all things emerges also in a more intuitive source such as this *Orphic Hymn* 15. As a matter of fact, even though as we have many times observed the *Orphic Hymns* have gone through a certain degree of re-elaboration and reflection, this hymn no doubt shows some clues of a more intuitive context in which a worshipper addresses the supreme god Zeus in order to obtain health, peace and glory. As Athanassakis and Wolkow confirm, the god "is above all presented as a cosmic god, the creator of the universe and universal order, all-powerful and majestic".⁸³² Furthermore, the hymn appears to be positioned after 14 hymns dedicated to primeval beings (to Hekate, Night, the Sky, Ether, Protogonos, the Stars, the Sun, Selene...) and seems to represent the climax of the representation of the universe of which he is the ruler and creator. If we take into account Graf's hypothesis (followed by Morand and partly Athanassakis and Wolkow) of the collection being a ritual in itself, this process could also be seen as the shaping of the universe in front of the initiates' eyes.⁸³³

So far we have therefore seen two main influences on our Orphic hymn. Indeed, we have noticed how the text reports concepts and terminologies possibly derived from Stoic influence, and others taken from 'genuinely' Orphic formulations and representations of the divinity. However, as in the case of fragment 416 F, other Orphic fragments are also

⁸³¹ Morand 2001: 66. She draws two important parallels, one with the Pythagorean influences and another one internal to the *Orphic Hymns*, quoting the *Orph. Hymn.* 52 which we shall later analyse (Morand 2001: 66-67, see §4.5).

⁸³² Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 105.

⁸³³ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 105.

intertwined with external philosophical traditions. This could lead us towards a possible interaction between different philosophical schools and religious expressions, thus inviting us to postulate a stream of tradition in which Stoic and Platonic formulations merge with Orphic literary traditions. This happened right from Plato's times, as we can read in a passage from the *Laws*:

ΑΘ. “ἄνδρες” τοίνυν φῶμεν πρὸς αὐτούς, “ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος, ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων ἔχων, εὐθείᾳ περαίνει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος· τῷ δὲ αἰὲ συνέπεται Δίκη τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου τιμωρός, ἧς ὁ μὲν εὐδαιμονήσῃν μέλλων ἐχόμενος συνέπεται ταπεινὸς καὶ κεκοσμημένος, [...]”.⁸³⁴

Athenian: Now then, our address should go like this: “Men, according to the ancient story, there is a god who holds in his hands the beginning and end and middle of all things, and straight he marches in the cycle of nature. Justice, who takes vengeance on those who abandon the divine law, never leaves his side. The man who means to live in happiness latches on to her and follows her with meekness and humility”.⁸³⁵

The scholiast of the *Laws* also confirms that the παλαιὸς λόγος to which Plato is referring is Orphic,⁸³⁶ and this passage demonstrates how the Orphic and Platonic texts were possibly somehow intertwined.

What we see in these selected *Orphic Hymns* is a continuation and/or a development of this complex twine of philosophical and religious concepts and expressions. I am inclined to see in these hymns a genuine though late expression of what can be defined as Orphic tradition, if by the adjective ‘Orphic’ we mean a religious tendency not always independent from other mystery (or non-mystery) cults but which shows itself to belong to a traditional

⁸³⁴ Pl. *Leg.* 715e-716a.

⁸³⁵ Transl. Cooper 1997: 1402.

⁸³⁶ “παλαιὸν δὲ λόγον λέγει τὸν Ὀρφικόν, ὃς ἐστὶν οὗτος· Ζεὺς ἀρχή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται, Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος” (see England 1921: 447). Des Places also comments that “l’ ‘antique parole’ désigne d’ordinaire un enseignement orphique; et en effet, le chap. 7 du *De mundo*, qui se clôt sur la citation des *Lois*, cite un poème orphique (non antérieur au Stoïcisme) sur le thème ‘Zeus principe, fin et milieu de tous les êtres’” (Des Places 1951: 66). See also Festugière 1949: 510.

literary and religious heritage. This heritage reflects many influences and cross-contaminations, so that we are not able to talk about a proper ‘Orphic religion’.⁸³⁷ What our *Orphic Hymns* seem to show, however, is a manifestation of a religious and literary tendency still active during the first centuries CE, both in an intuitive and a more reflective way.

Proceeding with the analysis of our hymn, we encounter at lines 8 and 9 a new semantic area of the attributes of Zeus, that of lightning and thunderbolt:

σεισίχθων, αὐξητᾶ, καθάρσιε, παντοτινάκτα,
 ἀστραπαῖε, βρονταῖε, κεραύνιε, φυτάλιε Ζεῦ⁸³⁸
 earth-shaker, increaser and purifier, all-shaker,
 god of thunder and lightning, Zeus the sower.⁸³⁹

It is not the first time that we see a description of the god with a reference to thunderbolt (line 6), lightning and thunder. Indeed, such a description is also found in the different versions of the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*⁸⁴⁰ and in the *Stoic Hymn to Zeus* as well.⁸⁴¹ When analysing this semantic area in Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus*, observing the parallels with the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus* of the *De mundo* version, Thom notices that “given the fact that the *De mundo* was clearly influenced by Stoic religious thought, it is not inconceivable that its author got the epithet ἀρχικέραυνος from Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus*, or that the Orphic poem itself underwent Stoic changes before it is quoted in *De mundo*”.⁸⁴² We are therefore presented with another confluence of Stoic and Orphic traditions intertwined.

However, it seems to me that in this case, given the parallelism and influence of Stoic tradition, the features of Zeus as master of the thunderbolt and lightning may be genuinely

⁸³⁷ For an introduction to and definition of what I define as ‘Orphic’, please see the Introduction, section 3.

⁸³⁸ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 8-9.

⁸³⁹ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 17 revised and edited by me.

⁸⁴⁰ See for example fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 1.

⁸⁴¹ Cleanth. *Hymn*, 32-33.

⁸⁴² Thom 2005: 146-147.

belonging to the Orphic literary and possibly religious (cult) tradition.⁸⁴³ Indeed, in addition to the reference to the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, there is also an internal reference to other two *Orphic Hymns* which are placed later in the collection. The first one is *Hymn 19*, where it is stated that Zeus is lord of thunder and lightning;⁸⁴⁴ the second is *Hymn 20* where ‘ἀστραπαῖε/ἀστραπαῖον’ appears once again.⁸⁴⁵ I will examine these two hymns in the next sections of this chapter, but what emerges from this initial analysis is that these features of Zeus as connected to the semantic area of thunder and lightning appear to be very much present in Orphic henotheistic sources such as the *Hymn to Zeus* and our *Orphic Hymns*.

At line 9 we met the term φυτάλιε, also linked with the previous terms ἀύξητά and καθάρσιε:

ἀστραπαῖε, βρονταῖε, κεράυνιε, φυτάλιε Ζεῦ.⁸⁴⁶

god of thunder and lightning, Zeus the sower.⁸⁴⁷

In these lines Zeus is presented as god of health and fertility, thus not only related to the weather and the natural elements. Even if this aspect is less present in our *Orphic Hymns*, it may be connected to the immediate context, occasion and aims of the original performance of the hymn -something that we may link with a more intuitive side of the collection. The hymn, in fact, ends with the usual request of gifts from the god invoked and the gifts are in this case represented by health, peace and wealth:

κλυθί μου, αἰολόμορφε, δίδου δ' ὑγίειαν ἀμεμφῇ
εἰρήνην τε θεὰν καὶ πλούτου δόξαν ἄμεμπτον.⁸⁴⁸

Hear me, god of many faces, grant me unblemished health,

⁸⁴³ See Ricciardelli 2000: 301.

⁸⁴⁴ *Orph. Hymn.* 19, 1-3, 9-12, 15-17 (item 27 of the Appendix).

⁸⁴⁵ *Orph. Hymn* 20, 1-5 (item 29).

⁸⁴⁶ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 9.

⁸⁴⁷ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 17 revised and edited by me.

⁸⁴⁸ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 10-11.

please grant me divine peace and riches, please grant me glory without blame.⁸⁴⁹

The reference to the god as increaser and sower might therefore have served as a benevolent introduction to the later request of the gifts. We have just observed how the reference to the great god Zeus, here at the centre of the worshippers' attention, as increaser and sower is not usual in the collection of the *Orphic Hymns*. This is true, but in my analysis I have also noticed how the representation of Zeus in henotheistic Orphic sources as giver of life is not so unusual. Indeed, in chapter 3 we have seen Zeus as origin of all things, donor of life and father of all mortals and gods,⁸⁵⁰ as well as ἄφθιτον and lord of spring.⁸⁵¹ The depiction of Zeus as health and fertility god may therefore be not completely unknown to the Orphic literary and religious tradition still partially alive in the first centuries CE.

4.3 *Orphic Hymn 19*

The second hymn of the collection I would now like to analyse is number 19, once again addressed to Zeus. Here the divinity is associated with natural phenomena, described mainly as god of thunderbolt and lightning and presiding over the blazing *cosmos*. The general idea that the poem wants to convey, as we shall see, is that of terror generated by phenomena such as hurricanes, storms and lightning. The full text of the hymn can be found in the Appendix, Item 27. To begin my analysis, I must anticipate that this is not the first time we see the description of the god with a reference to thunderbolt and lightning. Indeed, as we have observed in the previous section, such a description is also found in the different versions of the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*⁸⁵² and also in the *Stoic Hymn to Zeus*.⁸⁵³ We have previously

⁸⁴⁹ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 17 revised and edited by me.

⁸⁵⁰ Fr. 416 (298 K.).

⁸⁵¹ Fr. 691 F (248 K.) see §3.5.

⁸⁵² Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.), 1= fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1.

⁸⁵³ Cleant. *Hymn*, 32-33.

seen how Thom establishes a relationship between the use of the term ἀργικέραυνος in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, in the *De mundo* and in the Orphic poems.⁸⁵⁴ Stoic and Orphic traditions are therefore once again intertwined. However, I also observed how the features of Zeus as master of the thunderbolt and lightning may genuinely belong to the Orphic literary and religious (cult) tradition. Indeed, in addition to the reference of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, there is an internal reference to (mainly) three *Orphic Hymns*: number 15, 19 (the object of our current analysis) and number 20 where 'ἀστραπαῖε/ ἀστραπαῖον' appears once again.⁸⁵⁵ These features of Zeus as connected to the semantic area of thunder and lightning appear to be very much present in Orphic henotheistic sources such as the *Hymn to Zeus* and our *Orphic Hymns*. I will therefore analyse all the analogies between these texts in order to cast light on possible parallels and draw conclusions on the henotheistic manifestation of the divine in Orphic religious streams.

The hymn begins with seven lines directly referring to Zeus. Indeed, our analysis might begin right from the title of the poem, in which it is stated that the prayer is addressed to Κεραυνοῦ Διός 'to Zeus the Thunderbolt'. Scholarship is, however, divided on the form of this title. Indeed, while the archetype (ψ) version of the hymn states the form Κεραυνοῦ, accepted by Quandt, Dieterich and others,⁸⁵⁶ manuscript φ⁸⁵⁷ shows the variant Κεραυνίου. Quandt, in fact, includes this last variant in his section 'de coniecturis apographorum – fallaces', commenting that the scribe reports it "quod scribae opus erat adiectivo ad Διός apto".⁸⁵⁸ Ricciardelli, on the other hand, supports the Κεραυνίου variant given the content of the hymn and the parallelism with the title Διὸς Ἀστραπαίου of Hymn 20 and the same

⁸⁵⁴ Thom 2005: 146-147.

⁸⁵⁵ *Orph. Hymn* 20, 1-5.

⁸⁵⁶ See Dieterich 1911: 82 n. 2; Quandt 1955 18*, 23*; Ricciardelli 2000: 315.

⁸⁵⁷ As Quandt reports, "Ambrosianus 11 (A 63 sup.), chartaceus: Orphei Argonautica, Orphei, Procli, Callimachi hymni. Scripsit Michael Suliardus anno 1509" (Quandt 1955: 3*).

⁸⁵⁸ Quandt 1955: 23*.

adjective contained in *Hymn 15*.⁸⁵⁹ I will not go any deeper into this matter, but I would like to stress the importance of this term in order to throw light on the relevance of the divine figure of Ζεὺς Κεραυν(ι)ός and his cult. A brief analysis of the cult of Ζεὺς Κεραυν(ι)ός appears to be indeed valuable to the aim of my research.

We see reference to the cult of Zeus *Keraun(i)os* in Pausanias, who in the 2nd century CE thus describes his altar in Olympia:

ἔνθα δὲ τῆς οἰκίας τὰ θεμέλια ἔστι τῆς Οἰνομάου, δύο ἐνταῦθά εἰσι βωμοί, Διὸς τε Ἐρκείου -τοῦτον ὁ Οἰνόμαος ἐφαίνετο αὐτὸς οἰκοδομήσασθαι, τῷ δὲ Κεραυνίῳ Διὶ ὕστερον ἐποίησαντο ἔμοι δοκεῖν βωμόν, ὅτ' ἐξ τοῦ Οἰνομάου τὴν οἰκίαν κατέσκηψεν ὁ κεραυνός.⁸⁶⁰

This is where the foundations of Oinomaos's house are, with two altars, one of Courtyard Zeus which Oinomaos would appear to have built himself, and one to Zeus of the Thunderbolt which I suppose they built later, when the thunderbolt struck down Oinomaos's house.⁸⁶¹

Farnell analyses several cults of Zeus in his book *The Cults of the Greek States*, observing that Zeus as thunder-god was worshipped as Κεραύνιος and Καταιβάτης in Olympia (as we have just seen), Κεραυνοβόλος in Tegea and Ἀστραπαῖος in Antandros, possibly all spots grouped by the condition of having been struck by lightning.⁸⁶² The author also underlines the antiquity of the cult related to Zeus Κεραύνιος at Mantinea⁸⁶³ in which the god is described as being the phenomenon itself.⁸⁶⁴ After having briefly described some of the most

⁸⁵⁹ “ἄστραπαῖε, βρονταῖε, κεράυνιε, φυτάλιε Ζεῦ” (*Orph. Hymn.* 15, 9). See West 1968: 291 and Ricciardelli 2000: 315.

⁸⁶⁰ Paus. *Perieg.* 5.14.7.

⁸⁶¹ Transl. Levi 1971b: 239. Later in the book Pausanias proceeds with the description of the site: Paus. *Perieg.* 5.20.6-7.

⁸⁶² Farnell 1896: 45.

⁸⁶³ See also Usener 1913: 471-497.

⁸⁶⁴ “The thunder is regarded as personal, and in this, as in other cases, we find traces of a very undeveloped stage of belief in Arcadia, a land where men offered prayers directly to the winds and the thunder, the elements themselves being viewed as sentient and divine” (Farnell 1896: 45-46).

‘primitive’ (in his words) cults related to this perception of the god,⁸⁶⁵ Farnell makes some observations on the divine figure of Zeus which seem very relevant to the aim of this research. He states that:

In the Greek theory concerning the physical world and the powers that ruled it we find beneath the bewildering mass of cults and legends a certain vague tendency that makes for monotheism, a certain fusion of persons in one, namely, Zeus. This tendency is genuine and expressed in popular cult, and is to be distinguished from the later philosophic movement. [...] As the functions of a god of the lower world and of a deity of vegetation and fertility were sometimes attached to Zeus, we are prepared to find him at times identified with Dionysos [...]. Zeus becomes the supreme but never the sole god in the physical universe.⁸⁶⁶

These observations on the divine figure of Zeus derive from an analysis which focuses on cult, and it is therefore interesting to take them into consideration when trying to examine the role of Zeus in our *Orphic Hymns*. However, it is important to make clear from the beginning that Farnell was writing in the 19th century, at a time when assumptions about the nature of Greek religion were very different. This does not mean that Farnell’s comments are useless – simply that his material needs to be treated with care.

Farnell appears to have noticed, sharing a common interpretation of ‘primitive’ religion based on the work of early anthropologists like James Frazer, how in (popular) cult the association of cults with natural phenomena and the powers that ruled over the natural world was quite widespread in the archaic and classical period. My analysis is now concerned with the intuitive side of the relationship between the worshipper and the divinity, and Farnell takes one step further when he observes a “certain tendency that makes for monotheism, a certain fusion of persons into one, namely, Zeus”. This is interesting as Farnell, in his investigation into the cults of the Greek states, seems to be able to trace the

⁸⁶⁵ Farnell 1896: 46.

⁸⁶⁶ Farnell 1896: 47-48.

tendency towards a sort of ‘unification’ into one deity, that is, a sort of henotheistic tendency which we have been studying in our analysis of Orphic reflective and now more intuitive sources. As stated many times during the course of this dissertation,⁸⁶⁷ I tend not to agree with the use of the term ‘monotheism’, and many observations sound dated given the fact that Farnell wrote at the end of the 19th century. However, I find it interesting to come across reflections of this kind in a study which partly echo my analysis on the figure of the ‘one’ god related to Zeus: in fact, Farnell starts from the analysis of the cult of Zeus *Keraun(i)os* and expands it observing its wider role in the pantheon and its relationship with the natural world. Indeed, he later reduces the extent to which he would apply the category of monotheism to the figure of Zeus:⁸⁶⁸

We have here to distinguish between the Zeus of legend and the Zeus as he appeared to the religious consciousness at serious moments. [...] Zeus is not only a god among other gods, but also God solely and abstractedly. [...] We are not obliged to see in this any trace of primitive monotheistic idea [...] at most it amounts not to monotheism but ‘henotheism’- if a very awkward term may be used to denote the exaltation of one figure in the polytheism till it overshadows without supplanting or abolishing the others.⁸⁶⁹

Even though he later continues using the term ‘monotheism’ as applied to religious literary sources, Farnell noticeably makes here some interesting comments about the use of the (‘awkward’, for the time) term ‘henotheism’ to refer to this kind of conception of Zeus, traceable to “religious consciousness at serious moments” (the reflective side of belief). The author also makes some remarks about Zeus’ role of creator, interestingly making reference also to Orphic sources:

The question arises whether he is ever regarded as the creator, either of the world, or of men, or of both? [...] Greek religion and religious myth, apart from Orphic teaching, have very little to say about creation, either on a large or small scale [...] Therefore the

⁸⁶⁷ See for example §1.5-6.

⁸⁶⁸ Farnell 1896: 83.

⁸⁶⁹ Farnell 1896: 85-86.

invocation Ζεῦ πάτερ expresses rather a moral or spiritual idea than any real theological belief concerning physical or human origins.⁸⁷⁰

Farnell claims to be able to identify a general tendency traceable to Greek cults according to which worshippers were not very much involved in associating Zeus with his role of creator of the world (and men), but rather see him under a moral and spiritual light. I would like to draw attention to the fact that he noticeably cites Orphic teaching saying that it did, indeed, focus on creation in theological terms. In fact, he also uses the term ‘belief’ to stress how the two sides (cult and belief) appear to be distant in this respect.

Unlike Farnell, I recognise the peculiarity of the Orphic ‘exception’ and a sort of distance from other cults and perceptions of the gods (in this case Zeus) when related to the natural world. I also see in our *Orphic Hymn* 19 and the reference to the cult of Zeus *Keraun(i)os* a sort of ‘confluence’ of the more reflective and a more intuitive side of Orphic belief. We can observe a reflection on the status of the one god as the ‘main’ divinity and a re-elaboration (versification) of the prayer, but we can also notice how the description of the god is connected to a set of images and representations derived from a ritual background linked with the documented cult of Zeus Thunderbolt.

Such observations can also proceed from the analysis of the epithet Zeus *Keraun(i)os* to the very first words of the text, that is the invocation to Ζεῦ πάτερ, Father Zeus. It is indeed interesting to notice how Zeus is referred first of all as father, thus establishing right from the beginning his role as dominant god and father to all creatures. In fact, the reference to Zeus as ‘father’ is a recurrent feature in the Orphic henotheistic sources we have been analysing so far.⁸⁷¹ I would only like to draw attention to the fact that the dominant figure of Zeus, analysed by me in ‘henotheistic’ terms, is here described as associated with natural phenomena such as the thunderbolt and lightning but is nonetheless also depicted with the

⁸⁷⁰ Farnell 1896: 48-49.

⁸⁷¹ For example, in fragment 416 (298 K.) from the lost Μικρότερος Κρατήρ, for which see §3.2

traditional feature of father (Ζεῦ πάτερ) of all beings thus establishing his sovereignty over the *cosmos*. Indeed, we should also think about the connotations of the use of the invocation πάτερ: is it conceived as having theological implications or is it perceived as a generic feature in a ‘moral and spiritual’ way as Farnell claimed?⁸⁷² My impression is that, even though it is true that at the end of the hymn we have a request for health, a life of prosperity, peace and other related gifts, the general tone of the hymn is focused on the role of Zeus as dominating the natural phenomena (‘ὕψιδρομον πυραυγέα κόσμον ἐλαύνων’)⁸⁷³ and I therefore tend to associate the depiction of Zeus as father to the one of a god who is presented as ruler of the *cosmos*. The ritual background, however, should not be forgotten and it is interesting to notice how in the analysis of the term πάτερ as attributed to Zeus we are able to see the confluence of a reflection on the one god (father as ruler of the natural phenomena) and a cult manifestation of the worship of Zeus *Keraun(i)os* (father as giver of gifts).

Lines 8-12 see a direct reference to the lightning, which is here defined as ὄπλον (l. 8) and βέλος (ll.9 and 12). It is not clear whether the lightning should be here considered as a ‘separate’ phenomenon or if it should be identified with Zeus.⁸⁷⁴ I would tend towards the latter, and to interpret these verses as a sort of *trait d’union* between the first 7 lines and the next ones again referring to Zeus *Kataibates*. Indeed, the lightning is defined at line 9 as ‘βρονταῖος’, as the god was called in *Hymn* 15:

ἀστραπαῖε, βρονταῖε, κεράυνιε, φυτάλιε Ζεῦ.⁸⁷⁵

god of thunder and lightning, Zeus the sower.⁸⁷⁶

A very similar definition of the god is also found in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, right before the quotation of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* I have previously analysed:

⁸⁷² See above Farnell 1896: 48-49.

⁸⁷³ *Orph. Hymn.* 19, 1.

⁸⁷⁴ See Ricciardelli 2000: 317.

⁸⁷⁵ *Orph. Hymn* 15, 9.

⁸⁷⁶ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 17 revised and edited by me.

Εἷς δὲ ὢν πολὺώνυμός ἐστι, κατονομαζόμενος τοῖς πάθεσι πᾶσιν ἅπερ αὐτὸς νεοχμοῖ. Καλοῦμεν γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ Ζῆνα καὶ Δία, παραλλήλως χρώμενοι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ὥς κἂν εἰ λέγοιμεν δι' ὃν ζῶμεν. Κρόνου δὲ παῖς καὶ χρόνου λέγεται, διήκων ἐξ αἰῶνος ἀτέρμονος εἰς ἕτερον αἰῶνα· ἀστραπαῖός τε καὶ βρονταῖος καὶ αἴθριος καὶ αἰθέριος κεραυνῖός τε καὶ ὑέτιος ἀπὸ τῶν ὑετῶν καὶ κεραυνῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καλεῖται. [...] ὥς δὲ τὸ πᾶν εἰπεῖν, οὐράνιός τε καὶ χθόνιος, πάσης ἐπώνυμος φύσεως ὢν καὶ τύχης, ἅτε πάντων αὐτὸς αἴτιος ὢν.⁸⁷⁷

Though he is one, he has many names, named for all the effects which he himself initiates. For we call him both Zena and Dia, using the names without distinction, as if we would say 'because of whom we live'. He is called Son of Cronus, that is, of Time, because he extends from an endless age to another age. He is also called God of Lightning and of Thunder, God of Air and of Ether, God of Thunderbolt and of Rain – after rain-showers and thunderbolts and the other things. [...] to sum up, he is God of Heaven and of Earth, because he is named after every nature and fortune, since he himself is the cause of all things.⁸⁷⁸

Radice also comments on this extract, observing how the idea of stating all these epithets and attributes connected to natural phenomena⁸⁷⁹ (since the god is the cause of all) is taken from the Orphics, and this is proved by the quotation of the fragment of the *Hymn to Zeus* reported right after this passage.⁸⁸⁰ Indeed, Aristotle seems to have known Orphic doctrines although he denies their 'authenticity' (the full text of the passage can be found in the Appendix – item 28).⁸⁸¹ This reinforces my idea of tracing a certain Orphic tradition that

⁸⁷⁷ *De mundo* 7.401a, 12-27.

⁸⁷⁸ Transl. Thom 2014: 55.

⁸⁷⁹ Thom (2014: 65 n.128) comments that "the term πολὺώνυμός is characteristic of a hymnic style [...], as is the listing of epithets that follows. Such an accumulation of names and epithets serves to glorify the god [...]"

⁸⁸⁰ "L'idea di collegare a Dio i vari nomi desunti dai vari fenomeni, per il motivo che Dio è causa dei medesimi, essendo causa di tutto quanto avviene, è desunta ancora una volta dal frammento orfico riportato. Ora si noti bene-risulta che Aristotele si sia occupato a fondo degli Orfici nel *De Philosophia*, come dimostrano alcuni frammenti pervenutici" (Reale-Bos 1994: 122-123).

⁸⁸¹ Philop. In *Arist. de anim.* 410b27, 21-29. The text is taken from a commentary on the *De anima* written by the 6th century Byzantine scholar Philoponus who quotes and comments passages from the Aristotelian treatise. For a comment on this passage see Hicks 1907: 295-296; Polansky 2007: 133. On Aristotle's comments and reflection on the authenticity of the Orphic poems and the Orphic phenomenon Ross observes that "Philoponus no doubt rightly, takes this [that is, the expression ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς καλουμένοις ἔπεσι] to mean that Aristotle did not believe in an Orpheus who wrote these poems, and adds that Aristotle expressed this disbelief in the *De*

attributes the domain of the thunderbolt and storm to a one, more powerful god - here Zeus. This tradition, probably applied both to intuitive and more reflective contexts, was also known to Aristotle and is possibly shown in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*. Our *Orphic Hymns* were composed at a later period; this Orphic religious and literary tradition, however, probably still survived and flowed into our *Orphic Hymn* 19 (and partly 15 and 20).

Returning to our analysis -as I have already noted- this general thematic analogy, along with a lexical one, invited Thom to hypothesise a relationship between this hymn, the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* of the *De mundo* version, the *De mundo* as a whole and Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*.⁸⁸² Thom also makes reference to West's earlier remarks, where he commented on the image of Zeus connected to the thunderbolt saying that

It is given point by an earlier passage in the poem where Cleanthes says that the whole cosmos willingly obeys Zeus' leadership because he holds in his invincible hands the fiery, ever-living thunderbolt, with which he directs the work of nature. This concept of the cosmic role of the thunderbolt is inspired by Heraclitus, and so far as I know it is peculiar to Cleanthes, the most Heraclitean of the Stoics.⁸⁸³

We are therefore presented with a text (our *Hymn* 19 and partially *Hymn* 15) belonging to the first centuries CE but that has been strongly influenced by concepts which go back to earlier Orphic and Stoic tradition. Many scholars, including West, Thom and Ricciardelli, also notice strong influences from Heraclitus. This conception of the cosmic role of Zeus as thunderbolt corresponds to what I have defined in our previous chapter(s) as the Orphic 'cosmic god' and

Philosophia" (Ross 1961: 209). See also Cicer. *De nat. deor.* 1.107 = *De Philos.* fr. 7 Ross = fr. 26 and 27 Gigon. For further comments on this passage see Pease 1955: 489-490; Dyck 2003: 189-190. On the expression "ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς καλούμενοις ἔπεισι" see Gagné 2007. Pease observes that "Nilsson suggests that Aristotle denied the existence of Orpheus but not of doctrines well-known in his time which circulated under the name of Orpheus; Jaeger, however, thinks that Aristotle questioned the genuineness of the 'Orphic' poems, since he denied that Orpheus wrote verse, but did not doubt the historicity of Orpheus himself [...]" (Pease 1955: 490).

⁸⁸² "The epithet ἀρχικέραυνος used here and later in the text, is also found in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* 32. It is not unlikely that Cleanthes himself is responsible for this epithet, which in turn may mean that pseudo-Aristotle used a Stoic version of the Orphic poem" (Thom 2014: 65 n.132).

⁸⁸³ West 1983: 219.

therefore reinforces my thesis of a henotheistic conception of the divinity in Orphic literary and religious tradition. What is stressed here is an aspect of the cosmic god, that is his attribute of thunderbolt. His relation to the thunder is ascribable to both the intuitive side of the Orphic belief and the reflective one.⁸⁸⁴ Indeed, as I have previously analysed, we have evidence of the cult of Zeus *Keraun(i)os* which certainly plays a role in the creative process of these hymns.

I have pointed out earlier that the relation between Zeus as a cosmic god and the thunder appears to be ascribable in these hymns to both the intuitive side of the Orphic belief and the reflective one. On the other hand, the references to previous Orphic, Stoic and Heraclitean tradition (not to mention the close relationship with the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise) invites us to stress the degree of awareness and reflectiveness involved in these poems. All the different literary and philosophical influences seem to me to be evidence of a relatively high degree of reflection and re-elaboration which would prompt me to interpret this hymn more as an intellectual work of art than straight-forward evidence of worship.

As anticipated, the image of the god ruling with thunderbolt and lightning over the *cosmos* calls to mind two Heraclitean fragments.⁸⁸⁵ The first one is about the igneous nature of the universe which recalls the first verse of our hymn ('Ζεῦ πάτερ, ὑψίδρομον πυραυγέα κόσμον ἐλαύνων') and more generally the overall atmosphere of the hymn:

κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων,
οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν,
ἀλλ' ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται
πῦρ αἰείζων, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.⁸⁸⁶

This world-order, the same for all (men),
no one of gods or men has made,

⁸⁸⁴ Another possible intuitive context in which Zeus is described as Thunderbolt is fr. 389 F (43+49+ p. 115 K., 4 [B 21] C.). See Allen 1907; Kruger 1938; Ricciardelli 2000: 315; Bernabé 2004: 310-13.

⁸⁸⁵ See Ricciardelli 2000: 315 and related bibliography.

⁸⁸⁶ Fr. 30 DK.

but it always was and is and shall be:
an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.⁸⁸⁷

The text seems to imply a world order (a *cosmos*) which – it is true – is made by no god, but that is also eternally connoted by its immortal divine fire.⁸⁸⁸

The second fragment is precisely about the thunderbolt:

τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός.⁸⁸⁹

Thunderbolt steers all things.⁸⁹⁰

As Marcovich observes, this saying was common also among the Stoics⁸⁹¹ and the word Κεραυνός (along with the sort of personification of thunderbolt) appears to be

like a ‘common denominator’ of both the traditional *Zeus* and the new *Fire*. Namely, the thunderbolt is Zeus’ main weapon and, *pars pro toto*, recalls easily the idea of Zeus as the *Supreme Divinity*. On the other hand, Κεραυνός is likely to imply here the purest or aithereal fire. [...] As Zeus’ traditional weapon the thunderbolt is a symbol of guidance and justice (punishment) directed towards *men* [...]. But as symbol of the purest and wise celestial fire [...] it implies a steering or directing capacity turned toward *physical things* (meteorological phenomena and cosmical processes).⁸⁹²

Indeed, other scholars have pointed out the connection between the figure of Zeus as supreme divinity connected to the thunderbolt and this natural phenomenon as linked with ethereal fire, guide and controller of the cosmic processes. Zeus is also very significantly mentioned by Heraclitus in fragment 32:

ἔν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον,
λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.⁸⁹³

⁸⁸⁷ Transl. Marcovich 1967: 268. On this fragment see Marcovich 1967: 261-273.

⁸⁸⁸ See Marcovich 1967: 273; Robinson 1987: 96-98; Sweet 1995: 58-59.

⁸⁸⁹ Fr. 64 DK. On this fragment see Marcovich 1967: 422-425 and Robinson 1987: 126-127.

⁸⁹⁰ Transl. Marcovich 1967: 424.

⁸⁹¹ For example, Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus*; see quotations in Marcovich 1967: 422.

⁸⁹² Marcovich 1967: 424-425.

⁸⁹³ Fr. 32 DK.

One (being), the only (truly) wise,
is both unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus.⁸⁹⁴

Heraclitus here makes reference to one supreme divinity,⁸⁹⁵ expressing a philosophical view which appears to be different from the traditional religious one.⁸⁹⁶ It is not my aim to analyse Heraclitus' philosophical position regarding possible henotheistic manifestations. What I wish to have made clear in this brief analysis of some fragments of the Pre-Socratic philosopher is the presence of the thunderbolt as connected with Zeus' supreme power and the igneous cosmic order. Indeed, as Robinson observes about fragment 64 on the thunderbolt:

any Greek reader would of course have picked up a reference to Zeus, a symbol of whose power the thunderbolt was. If, as seems very probable, the divine and immortal *aethēr* was one and the same as Heraclitus' 'one wise thing, unwilling and willing to be called by the name Zeus' (fragment 32), then the *power* of Zeus, god of the bright *aethēr* (fragment 120), would be naturally expressed by what appeared to emanate violently from it – the thunderbolt and the lightning flash.⁸⁹⁷

This image of the thunderbolt, Zeus and cosmic order is something that I have examined right from the beginning of the analysis of *Hymn* 19. This possible connection also to a Heraclitean echo directs our research to the stress on the reflective side of the collection of the *Orphic Hymns*. Along with references to the Stoics and pseudo-Aristotle, these possible literary echoes therefore invite me to draw attention to aspects of reflection and

⁸⁹⁴ Transl. Marcovich 1967: 445. On this fragment see Marcovich 1967: 444-446; Robinson 1987: 102; Sweet 1995: 59.

⁸⁹⁵ "Sometimes Heraclitus characterizes the structural unity of the world as 'god', 'Zeus' or 'the divine purpose'. In this sense 'God' is another name for *logos* – the divine law upon which all gods, humans and human laws depend (frs. 30, 114). 'God' and 'Zeus' are used both to metaphorically represent the cosmic order and, in the more traditional sense, to refer to the king of the Olympian pantheon" (Sweet 1995: 59).

⁸⁹⁶ "Thus it seems that we have to do here not only with an opposition between two religions (the traditional Homeric and a new, radical one), but also with the conflict between the religious mentality and the philosophical thought, since Heraclitus' 'One being, the only true one' seems to be a *transcendent* metaphysical principle" (Marcovich 1967: 446).

⁸⁹⁷ Robinson 1987: 101.

manipulation of the collection of hymns which thus confirm their status of later re-elaboration of an original intuitive context of formation.

Proceeding with our analysis, at lines 13-17 we see the description of the lightning in terms of its effects both on land and in heaven, and in the last two lines Zeus is depicted as dominating all *cosmos*, both sea and sky. The influence of a Stoic conception of the divinity, present in the world in a sort of immanentistic way, is noticeable in our Orphic source(s) and we have already analysed Thom's observations on the reference to the earth and then heavens in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*:⁸⁹⁸

ἀμφήκη πυρόεντα αἰειζώντα κεραυνόν·
τοῦ γὰρ ὑπὸ πληγῆς φύσεως πάντ' ἔργα ... [...]
τῶς τόσσοι† γεγαῶς ὕπατος βασιλεὺς διὰ παντός.
Οὐδέ τι γίγνεται ἔργον ἐπὶ χθονὶ σοῦ δίχα, δαῖμον,
οὔτε κατ' αἰθέριον θεῖον πόλον οὔτ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ.⁸⁹⁹

The two-edged, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt.
For by its stroke all works of nature <are guided>. [...]
Because of this you are so great, the highest king for ever.
Not a single deed takes place on earth without you, God,
nor in the divine celestial sphere nor in the sea⁹⁰⁰

As anticipated in my previous comments on *Hymn 15*, I am tempted to see in *Hymns 15* and 19 a Stoic influence but also the remains of a proper Orphic traditional heritage, taken from a literary corpus still circulating in the first centuries CE though probably mixed with other philosophical and religious elements.

Lines 18-23 are the closing lines of the hymn. First, we see the invocation to the god who is invoked by the double use of the word ἀλλά:

ἀλλά, μάκαρ, θυμὸν [~~~~~] κύμασι πόντου

⁸⁹⁸ Thom 2005: 93-94. See my analysis in §4.2.

⁸⁹⁹ Cleant. *Hymn*, 10-16.

⁹⁰⁰ Transl. Thom 2005: 40.

ἡδ' ὀρέων κορυφαῖσι· τὸ σὸν κράτος ἴσμεν ἅπαντες.⁹⁰¹

O blessed one... The anger of the sea waves,
the anger of the mountain peaks – we all know your power.⁹⁰²

Praise and repetition of the divine attributes of the god in order to introduce the requests of gifts is often found in hymns:⁹⁰³ indeed, we see the formula ‘ἄλλά, μάκαρ’ in many of our *Orphic Hymns*.⁹⁰⁴ The worshipper asks Zeus to avert his anger, and the power of god is represented as manifesting throughout land (mountains) and sea to express the absolute power of Zeus over the whole *cosmos*. The requests become then more general – prosperity, health, peace and cheerful thoughts:

ἄλλὰ χαρεῖς λοιβαῖσι δίδου φρεσὶν αἴσιμα πάντα
ζωήν τ' ὀλβιόθυμον, ὁμοῦ θ' ὑγίειαν ἄνασσαν
εἰρήνην τε θεόν, κουροτρόφον, ἀγλαότιμον,
καὶ βίον εὐθύμοισιν ἀεὶ θάλλοντα λογισμοῖς.⁹⁰⁵

Enjoy this libation and give all things pleasing to the heart:
a life of prosperity, queenly health,
divine peace that nurtures youths, crowned with honors,
a life ever blooming with cheerful thoughts.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰¹ *Orph. Hymn.* 19, 18-19.

⁹⁰² Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 20 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁰³ See Ricciardelli 2000: 438, n.8 and the bibliography which can there be found.

⁹⁰⁴ Such as *Orph. Hymn.* 6, 10; 11, 21; 23, 7; 48, 5; 57, 12; 58, 9; 64, 12; 85, 9; 86, 16; 87, 10. Morand (2001: 51) observes that “la conjonction adversative ἄλλά est le terme qui introduit le plus de demandes finales. Elle marque une rupture avec ce qui précède, c’est-à-dire avec le développement. Elle indique ainsi qu’un nouveau sujet est abordé, de manière à attirer l’attention sur ce qui va suivre”.

⁹⁰⁵ *Orph. Hymn.* 19, 20-23.

⁹⁰⁶ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 20 revised and edited by me.

4.4 Orphic Hymn 20

The third hymn of the collection I would now like to analyse is *Hymn 20*, once again addressed to Zeus. Here the divinity is described as god of thunderbolt and lightning as it was in the previous hymn. The general idea of the poem is again that of terror generated by lightning and of the powerful role of Zeus as ruler of the *cosmos* (the full text of the hymn is in the Appendix, item 29). We see in this hymn and in the many attributes of the god which characterise it the general idea of a celebration of Zeus *Astrapaios* as great ruler of the *cosmos*, and of the visual and sound effects of the lightning. The poem appears to form a pair with *Hymn 19*, thanks to its similarities linked with the role of light and flash, as well as the stress on the element of fire and of meteorological phenomena. However, the two also present some important differences. Indeed, this hymn seems to be dedicated to Zeus *Astrapaios* as lord of lightning without any mention of thunder – a key element in our previous hymn. The Greeks, in fact, appear to differentiate the three elements of “the sound of thunder, the flash of lightning and the physical bolt itself”⁹⁰⁷ as West observes commenting on a passage from Hesiod’s *Theogony*⁹⁰⁸ where the Cyclopes are said to have given thunder to Zeus and fashioned the thunderbolt:

The Cyclopes make thunder, so Hesiod gives them names suggested by thunder. Zeus’ weapon is regularly described in three words: βροντή, στεροπή and κεραυνός [...]. These really represent three different aspects of the same phenomenon: βροντή is what you hear, στεροπή is what you see, and κεραυνός is what hits you. But because there are three separate words, the unsophisticated mind thinks of three separate things.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁷ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 112.

⁹⁰⁸ Hes. *Theog.* 139-141. See also Blinkenberg 1911.

⁹⁰⁹ West 1966: 207.

If we begin our analysis with the very title of our poem, we can see how Zeus is directly referred to as *Astrapaios*. I had previously noticed how also the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo* mentions this attribute of Zeus:

Κρόνου δὲ παῖς καὶ χρόνου λέγεται, διήκων ἔξ αἰῶνος ἀτέρμονος εἰς ἕτερον αἰῶνα·
ἀστραπαῖός τε καὶ βρονταῖος καὶ αἴθριος καὶ αἰθέριος κεραυνίος τε καὶ ὑέτιος ἀπὸ τῶν
ὑετῶν καὶ κεραυνῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καλεῖται.⁹¹⁰

He is called Son of Cronus, that is, of Time [Chronos], because he extends from an endless age to another age. He is also called God of Lightning and of Thunder, God of Air and of Ether, God of Thunderbolt and of Rain – after rain-showers and thunderbolts and the other things.⁹¹¹

I see in our *Orphic Hymn* 20 and the reference to the cult of Zeus *Astrapaios* a sort of ‘confluence’ of the more reflective and a more intuitive side of Orphic belief, as I did with *Hymn* 19. We can indeed, observe a reflection of the status of the one god as the ‘main’ divinity and a re-elaboration (versification) of the prayer, but we can also notice how the description of the god is connected to a set of images and representations derived from a ritual background linked with the documented cult of Zeus lord of lightning.

In his article on *Classical Weather Lore of Thunder and Lightning*, Eugene McCartney observes how, when it comes to thunder and lightning in religious contexts, “there is much evidence of the peculiar and profound religious reverence of the ancients for the bolt and its chief wielder”.⁹¹² He also adds that in Antandros there was a festival of Lightning Zeus which probably lasted several days: we have reference, for example, to the conferment of an honorary crown on the first day of the celebration.⁹¹³ This refers to an inscription found in Antandros and dated to the 1st century CE, from which we learn that the festival related to

⁹¹⁰ *De mundo* 7.401a, 15-19.

⁹¹¹ Transl. Thom 2014: 55.

⁹¹² McCartney 1932: 214. See also McCartney 1925: 155.

⁹¹³ See McCartney 1932: 214. It is worth noticing that this information is based on the same inscription Farnell (and Lenormant) uses.

Zeus *Astrapaios* was the most important of the town of Antandros, and that on the first day an honorary crown was given to Polycrates of Athens.⁹¹⁴ François Lenormant, who published this inscription, connected these lines with our passage from the *De mundo* and our *Orphic Hymns*,⁹¹⁵ commenting that both he and other scholars

[...] Ont établi par les arguments les plus décisifs que sous ces surnoms se cachait l'idée, non du dieu qui, du haut des cieux, envoie sur la terre les signes de sa puissance et lance les foudres, mais du dieu qui descend lui-même sous la forme de la foudre, des éclairs, de la pluie. Ainsi, Zeus Astrapaeus est le dieu-éclair, Zeus Céraunius, le dieu-foudre. [...] Ces notions sont entièrement conformes aux génies des religions antiques, qui incorporent la divinité à toutes les substances et à tous les phénomènes, et qui font de chacun, considéré isolément, un symbole de la divinité elle-même.⁹¹⁶

Lenormant appears to be offering a helpful interpretation for our understanding of how important the festival was, and it is surely interesting to notice how he commented on the popularity of the association of specific cults with natural phenomena. As we have observed in the previous section on the work of Farnell, however, although these scholars note how this association of specific deities and powers that ruled over the natural world was quite widespread in the archaic and classical period, their work should be taken into consideration very carefully. Their comments on the importance and features of these cults as linked with (in our case) Zeus are indeed very interesting but also conditioned by assumptions typical of 'primitive religions' interpretations popular in the 19th century. I would therefore take on the comments on the evidence of cult and the importance of the association of Zeus as ruler over the *cosmos* and the lightning (Zeus *Astrapaios*), without stressing the relevance of the identification of the divinity with natural phenomena.

⁹¹⁴ “Ἐδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ Ἀντανδρίων στεφανῶσαι Πολυκράτην Πολυκράτους, Ἀθηναῖον, τῇ πρώτῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς Διὸς Ἀστραπαίου, ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ τῆς εἰς τὴν πόλιν εὐνοίας” (see Lenormant 1864: 49).

⁹¹⁵ Lenormant 1864: 50.

⁹¹⁶ Lenormant 1864: 50-51.

The evidence of the cult dedicated to Zeus *Astrapaios* also derives from the *Geography* of Strabo who, in his chapter on Boiotia, mentions the altar to Zeus *Astrapaios* in Athens.⁹¹⁷ What we have here is further evidence of the cult of Zeus specifically linked with lightning even though not related with Orphic rites. It is interesting, however, to notice how this cult may have been known across the Greek territory since, as the text reports, it was also possible to visit the altar to Zeus *Astrapaios* situated in Athens between the temples of Pythian Apollo and Olympian Zeus. Another aspect of this testimony which is relevant for the aim of this research is the fact that Strabo mentions the emotional and visual reactions related to the manifestations of the flashes of lightning and the consequent ritual practices connected to it. This is similar to what we also find in our Orphic hymn, and might lead us to imagine a side of this cult in which the worshipper linked the manifestation of the lightning and the visual ritual connected to the god closer to that natural phenomenon (here Zeus).

Moving on to the general structure of the hymn, we can notice how the short poem (only six verses) is almost entirely dedicated to the list of adjectives referred to the god. The first verb used by the worshipper to invoke the god (κυκλήσκω) connects to the final request (εὐμενέοντα φέρειν) in a sort of cyclical structure without, however, clear internal distinctions.⁹¹⁸ Lines 1-3 appear to describe the manifestation of the lightning from its appearance to the flashing trajectory through the sky. The depiction of the scene, represented using both visual and sound ‘effects’ (ἔρισμάραγον, περίφαντον, / ἄέριον, φλογόεντα, πυρίδρομον, ἀεροφεγγῇ, / ἀστράπτοντα σέλας νεφέων παταγοδρόμωι αὐδῇ), the stress on the visual and resonant features of the god, and with the relative simplicity of the structure of the poem and its ‘peculiar’ ending (which I will soon analyse), encourage me to see in this text valuable testimony of a hymn possibly used during a cult.

⁹¹⁷ Strabo *Geog.* 9.2.11. The full passage can be found in item 30 of the Appendix.

⁹¹⁸ See Morand 2001: 41.

To what extent, however, can we talk about a specific Orphic rite? As I have many times stated during the course of my analysis, I believe it is possible to trace in this collection the influence of a great variety of philosophical (pseudo-Aristotelian, Stoic...) and religious (Dionysian, partly Eleusinian) features. The religious rituals and (partly) conceptions that can be found in this collection must be, therefore, carefully analysed throwing light on their connection with the wider philosophical and religious background. However, I would not dismiss such a literary tradition under a generic cross-contamination of different influences. I consider such texts as evidence of the influence of different philosophical and religious positions on a literary tradition (a reflective Orphic corpus) partly connected to an actual rite.

Furthermore, it is possible to observe in some of these texts attention to one specific, greater deity which attracts the worshipper's (and reader's) attention as the main divinity. The first noticeable term that we encounter is μέγαν:

Κικλήσκω μέγαν, ἄγνόν, ἐρισμάραγον, περίφαντον⁹¹⁹

I call upon great and pure, upon resounding and illustrious⁹²⁰

In his paper on the notion of 'megatheism' Chaniotis puts forward the idea of a god perceived as 'great' or 'the greatest', prompted by the competition between cities and religious groups.⁹²¹ The scholar, in fact, talks about a kind of 'superlativism' which can be observed in honorary inscriptions and epitaphs, and explains his position towards this terminology stating that:

I use the term 'megatheism' not as an alternative to monotheism or henotheism, but as a designation of an expression of piety which was based on a personal experience of the presence of god, represented one particular god as somehow superior to others, and was

⁹¹⁹ *Orph. Hymn.* 20, 1.

⁹²⁰ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 21 revised and edited by me.

⁹²¹ Chaniotis 2010.

expressed through oral performances (praise, acclamations, hymns) accompanying, but not replacing, ritual actions.⁹²²

Chaniotis therefore focuses his attention mainly on ritual and cult, selecting texts and inscriptions that show the worship of a particular god without excluding the presence of other deities, for the aim of obtaining specific or general benefits. When discussing the specific term μέγας, he interestingly observes that

Μέγας, the most common and oldest among the ‘acclamatory epithets’, is closely connected with this need of the mortals to experience the presence of a god. What made a god μέγας were power (δύναμις), efficacy (ἀρετή), presence (ἐπιφάνεια), infallible justice (νέμεσις, δίκαιον), visible holiness (ὅσιον), willingness to listen to the just prayers of humans (ἐπήκοος).⁹²³

Chaniotis also observes how listings of epithets are a stylistic feature of many religious texts of the Imperial period (magical texts, aretalogies of Egyptian gods, dedications), including our *Orphic Hymns*.⁹²⁴ Indeed, as we have seen, our very *Hymn 20* is mainly made up of epithets referred to Zeus *Astrapaios*, probably aimed at expressing in the best way possible the complexity of the essence of that divine entity. However, as Richard Gordon observes, the evidence analysed by Chaniotis appears mainly as acclamations and “utterances designed to ‘get things done’, not to make abstract claims about ontology”.⁹²⁵ I would therefore be careful to use the term ‘megatheism’ as main terminology related to our *Orphic Hymns* which show both an intuitive and reflective side of the Orphic belief.

It is thus interesting to notice how the term μέγαν is found only in this text, a poem which I have just described as closely connected to the intuitive side of Orphic belief and to a possible actual cult. The importance of this term is also stressed by Dario Sabbatucci who, in

⁹²² Chaniotis 2010: 113.

⁹²³ Chaniotis 2010: 134.

⁹²⁴ Chaniotis 2010: 132.

⁹²⁵ Gordon 2014: 671.

his essays on Greek mysticism, dedicates a chapter on the analysis of the *Megaloi Theoi* and the term μέγας in mystery contexts.⁹²⁶ The scholar interestingly draws attention to the religious relevance of such terminology and its relationship with mystery cult, even though I would not agree when he argues that he can trace this phenomenon back to pre-Greek divinities or -on the other hand- external influences.⁹²⁷

Proceeding with the analysis of the epithets referred to Zeus, the second one that attracts our attention is the term ἄγνόν (line 1). This is a term that could be found many times in our *Orphic Hymns*⁹²⁸ and twice in this same hymn.⁹²⁹ Still at line 1 we find two terms that express the power of Zeus both in acoustic and visual terms: ἐρισμάραγον and περίφαντον, that is resounding and illustrious. The term ἐρισμάραγον is also found in Hesiod's *Theogony* as referring again to Zeus,⁹³⁰ and in a very interesting passage from Lucian's dialogue *Timon*.⁹³¹ Indeed, in the prologue the author invokes a 'weak' Zeus with many epithets asking the god to strike the wicked men with lightning as he did in the old times. We read here a sort of 'reductio ad absurdum' of the traditional beliefs in the Greek pantheon,⁹³² and the final impression of the aretalogy is that of a parody of the traditional prayers. However, even if in the form of a parody, the passage represents an interesting piece of evidence of the perception of Zeus as god of lightning in the 2nd century CE:

⁹²⁶ Sabbatucci 1991: 197-226.

⁹²⁷ Sabbatucci 1991: 200 ff.

⁹²⁸ See the *Orph. Hymn. Proem* 41 and Ricciardelli 2000: 224; 320; 392-393.

⁹²⁹ See Ricciardelli 2000: 320. As Rudhardt observes, the adjective "S'applique parfois à un ἱερόν: la qualité qu'il signifie s'ajoute à celles qui sont essentielles au sanctuaire et lui confère un surcroît d'excellence. Le ton des textes où notre adjectif paraît montre en effet que la qualité énoncée inspire un grand respect; souvent même ἅγιος accompagne σεμνός et le renforce. [...] En bref, l'adjectif ἅγιος signifie une qualité éminemment respectable en vertu d'une ancienneté qui remonte à l'origine des lignées ancestrales [...]" (Rudhardt 1958: 39).

⁹³⁰ Hes. *Theog.* 815.

⁹³¹ On this dialogue, both serious and comic, belonging to the tradition of the Second Sophistic, see Tomassi 2011 and related bibliography.

⁹³² Tomassi 2011: 185-186.

ὦ Ζεῦ φίλιε καὶ ξένιε καὶ ἑταιρεῖε καὶ ἐφέστιε καὶ ἀστεροπητὰ καὶ ὄρκιε καὶ νεφεληγερέτα καὶ ἐρίγδουπε καὶ εἴ τί σε ἄλλο οἱ ἐμβρόντητοι ποιηταὶ καλοῦσι, — καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ἀπορῶσι πρὸς τὰ μέτρα· τότε γὰρ αὐτοῖς πολυώνυμος γινόμενος ὑπερείδεις τὸ πίπτον τοῦ μέτρου καὶ ἀναπληροῖς τὸ κεχηνὸς τοῦ ῥυθμοῦ — ποῦ σοι νῦν ἡ ἐρισμάραγος ἀστραπή καὶ ἡ βαρύβρομος βροντή καὶ ὁ αἰθαλόεις καὶ ἀργήεις καὶ σμερδαλέος κεραυνός;⁹³³

Ho, Zeus, you Protector of Friends and Guests and Comrades, Keeper of the Hearth, Lord of the Lightning, Guardian of Oaths, Cloud-Compeller, Loud-Thunderer and whatever else crazy poets call you, above all when they are in trouble with their verses, for then to help them out you assume a multitude of names and so shore up the weak spots in their metre and fill up the gaps in their rhythm! Where now is your crashing lightning, your rolling thunder and your blazing, flashing, horrid bolt?⁹³⁴

Lucian is here clearly criticizing the common association between the divinity and natural phenomena, thus however showing us the illustrious tradition he is gleaning his material from.⁹³⁵ The epithets also remind us of the list of epithets attributed to the god found in the pseudo-Aristotelian passage I have many times quoted, thus making this extract even more interesting for the aim of my comparative analysis.⁹³⁶

Lines 2-4, as I have anticipated, stress the features of Zeus as the main powerful god dominating over the *cosmos* through his blazing fire:

ἀέριον, φλογόεντα, πυρίδρομον, ἀεροφεγγῇ,
ἀστράπτοντα σέλας νεφέων παταγοδρόμωι αὐδῇ,
φρικώδη, βαρύμηνιν, ἀνίκητον θεὸν ἀγνόν⁹³⁷

Upon ethereal and blazing Zeus, whose racing fire shines through the air.
Your light flashes through the clouds with an ear-splitting clap.
O horrid, O wrathful and pure, O invincible god⁹³⁸

⁹³³ Lucian *Timon* 1.

⁹³⁴ Transl. Harmon 1985: 327 revised and edited by me.

⁹³⁵ See Tomassi 2011: 193.

⁹³⁶ *De mundo* 7.401a. See also Tomassi 2011: 196.

⁹³⁷ *Orph. Hymn.* 20, 2-4.

⁹³⁸ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 21 revised and edited by me.

This stress on the cosmic order and blazing fire of both this *cosmos* and the natural phenomenon of the flash of lightning permeates the entire hymn and allows me to establish once again a relationship between this text and the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo*, along with the Stoic attention focused on the role of fire.

At line 5 we see the reference to Zeus as παγγενέτην, ‘begetter’.⁹³⁹ In *Hymn 15* we had also encountered a similar idea of Zeus as giver of life and all-generating.⁹⁴⁰ As I have previously observed, the generative role of Zeus is one of the main features of hymns related to Zeus, and our two *Orphic Hymns* are no exception. What seems to be stressed in *Hymn 15* is, however, his creative activity also as a mental activity (‘διὰ σὴν κεφαλὴν’)⁹⁴¹ while our *Hymn 20* seems to focus the worshipper’s (and reader’s) attention on the role of Zeus as creator of all *cosmos* and all meteorological phenomena. The same terminology is also found in another *Orphic Hymn* (73), this time not dedicated to Zeus but to a ‘Daimon’, a vague reference to a divine force which is here worshipped as a sort of household god.⁹⁴² This *daimon*, in the first lines, assumes the name and features of Zeus:

Δαίμονος, θυμίαμα λίβανον.
Δαίμονα κικλήσκω † μεγάλην ἡγήτορα φρικτόν,
μειλίχιον Δία, παγγενέτην, βιοδώτορα θνητῶν,
Ζῆνα μέγαν, πολύπλαγκτον, ἀλάστορα, παμβασιλῆα,
πλουτοδότην, ὅποταν γε βρυάζων οἶκον ἐσέλθῃ,
ἔμπαλι δὲ τρύχοντα βίον θνητῶν πολυμόχθων·
ἐν σοὶ γὰρ λύπης τε χαρᾶς † κληῖδες ὁχοῦνται.⁹⁴³

5

To Daimon. Incense – frankincense.
I call upon Daimon, the grand and the dreaded leader,
gentle Zeus, who gives birth to all, who gives livelihood to mortals.
Great Zeus, wide roving, avenger, king of all,

⁹³⁹ See Ricciardelli 2000: 321.

⁹⁴⁰ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 6-7.

⁹⁴¹ *Orph. Hymn.* 15, 3.

⁹⁴² See Quandt 1955: 50-51; Ricciardelli 2000: 502-504; Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 198-200.

⁹⁴³ *Orph. Hymn.* 73, 1-6.

giver of wealth when you enter the house in the abundance of your powers,
you refresh the life of mortals worn out with toil,
you possess the keys to joy and sorrow as well.⁹⁴⁴

The god, here Daimon/Zeus, is referred to as ‘μεγάλαν’ and, most of all, ‘παγγενέτην’, that is a deity which gives birth to all (*cosmos* and mortals). The similarities between *Hymn* 20 and 73 in terms of vocabulary and structure are quite evident especially in the first part of the hymn.⁹⁴⁵ We may be presented, in fact, with internal allusions and clues, intentionally or unintentionally inserted by the author(s) of the collection. It is true that I stressed the intuitive features of hymn 20 and its possible relationship with an actual cult and ritual practices. However, these internal references might also prompt us to think in terms of literary allusions inside the text. Indeed, the main divinity that seems here to be addressed is Zeus as not only a celestial god but also as a god of fertility. The generative powers of Zeus are a feature that we have been analysing right from the Orphic henotheistic fragments of the previous chapter: Zeus as creator and father of all mortals and non-mortals, begetter of all.

After having reaffirmed the status of Zeus as the greatest god (βασιλῆα μέγιστον, line 5), the hymn ends with a special request of a sweet death for the worshipper:

εὐμενέοντα φέρειν γλυκερὴν βίότοιο τελευτήν.⁹⁴⁶

[I call upon you] to be kind and to bring a sweet end to my life.⁹⁴⁷

Such a request is found in other *Orphic Hymns* although it does not appear as the most frequent one.⁹⁴⁸ As Athanassakis and Wolkow observe, “it is interesting to note that, while there are a number of hymns in the collection that ask in one way or another for a noble end

⁹⁴⁴ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 58 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁴⁵ Athanassakis-Wolkow (2013: 200) also stress similarities between these two hymns and *Hymn* 15.

⁹⁴⁶ *Orph. Hymn.* 20, 6.

⁹⁴⁷ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 21 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁴⁸ *Orph. Hymn.* 11, 25, 28, 67, 73. See Ricciardelli 2000: 294, 321.

to life, the only ones where the addressee is asked to bring a sweet one is here and in OH73 to Daimon, who is probably identified with Zeus”.⁹⁴⁹ Hymn 73, in fact, ended with a similar request:

τοιγάρ τοι, μάκαρ, ἀγνέ, πολύστονα κήδε' ἐλάσσας,
ὅσσα βιοφθορίην πέμπει κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν,
ἔνδοξον βιοτῆς γλυκερὸν τέλος ἐσθλὸν ὀπάζοις.⁹⁵⁰

So, o pure and blessed one, drive painful cares away,
cares that dispatch ruin to all that live throughout the whole earth,
and bring a glorious end to my life, a sweet and noble one.⁹⁵¹

What seems to be specific about *Hymn 20*, however, is the relationship between this particular request of a sweet end to life and the general attention given to the flash of lightning. As Athanassakis and Wolkow have observed, this kind of death requested by the initiate might be connected to a kind of religious significance: the two authors mention, in fact, some golden tablets referring to being killed by Zeus' lightning.⁹⁵² The final suggestion would be to consider this request as a sort of metaphor for being purified in death, thus enjoying an even more special status. As the scholars point out, however, “the idea, of course, is not that the initiates wish to be struck by lightning but that their efforts in following the cult would effectively purify their *psukhē* in preparation for death”.⁹⁵³ These lines are therefore important because they seem to highlight a different aspect of the Orphic worship

⁹⁴⁹ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 113.

⁹⁵⁰ *Orph. Hymn.* 73, 7-9.

⁹⁵¹ Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 58 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁵² Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 113. The tablets are number 5, 6 and 7 in the edition of Graf-Johnston 2007, for which see Graf-Johnston 2007: 125-127. The scholars propose, among other readings, a ‘heroic interpretation’ of the initiates’ wish to be struck by lightning, which promises “that the soul of the initiate will join the company of gods and heroes. Moreover, given that fire, especially heavenly fire, is a cleansing agent, death by lightning also aligns with the primary theme of these particular tablets – purity” (Graf-Johnston 2007: 126).

⁹⁵³ Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 113. Ricciardelli (2000: 321) also comments that “la frequenza della richiesta di un buon fine di vita fa escludere l’idea [...] che qui si tratti di una preghiera per una morte dovuta al fulmine, secondo i Greci segno di benevolenza da parte degli dèi”.

which we have never encountered before: indications of ideas on the afterlife. In this case we are presented with a more intuitive approach to the matter: the worshipper is, in fact, probably not reflecting on his condition after death but rather simply hoping for a sweet ending to his life also thanks to purifying rituals. As Morand observes:

Une mort douce implique-t-elle qu'elle intervienne le plus tard possible, ou doit-elle être sans douleur, dans de bonnes conditions matérielles, ou encore une mort accompagnée de promesses d'une autre vie meilleure? En général, il semble que ce soit plutôt une longue vie accompagnée de présents dans la vie terrestre qui est requise dans les demandes.⁹⁵⁴

4.5 Conclusions and Notes on the *Orphic Hymn* 52

I would now like to draw together some provisional remarks on the role and figure of Zeus as father. In *Hymn* 19 we saw how Zeus was referred to first of all as father, thus establishing right from the beginning his role as dominant god and father to all creatures. In fact, I stressed how the reference to Zeus as 'father' is a recurrent feature in the Orphic henotheistic sources we had analysed, such as fragment 416 (298 K.) from the lost Μικρότερος Κρατήρ⁹⁵⁵ and 620 F (299 K.) from the *Oaths*.⁹⁵⁶ I am inclined to associate the depiction of Zeus as father to a deeper and more theological kind of reflection, in which the god is presented as ruler of the *cosmos*. But at the same time, we should be careful in thinking about the range of meanings of the term. If a worshipper calls Zeus πάτερ, whose father does he think he is? There are clearly various options. In ancient Greek polytheism Zeus is described as father of gods and men and ruler of the *cosmos* but less often creator, and he is

⁹⁵⁴ Morand 2001: 214. Burkert also mentioned the 'combined' concern for both mortal matters and life after death in Dionysian mysteries (Burkert 1987: 21-22).

⁹⁵⁵ Fr. 416 (298 K.), 4.

⁹⁵⁶ Fr. 620 F (299 K.), 1-2. See §3.2 and §3.4

more specifically father of some of the other Olympians (and no other god is father of other Olympians) – so he is also father as head of the Olympian household.

With regard to this analysis of the many possible meanings of ‘father’, I would like to mention one more hymn that we have not examined in the course of this chapter. The hymn (whose full text can be found in the Appendix, item 31) is number 52 addressed to Dionysos as god of Triennial Feasts and describes processions typically performed by maenads and later fixed as general manifestations of Dionysian forms of worship and iconography.⁹⁵⁷ I am mainly interested in lines 5-6 where the god is described as ‘secret offspring of Zeus, / Primeval, Erikepaïos, Father and son of the gods’ (‘κρύφιον Διὸς ἔρνος, / πρωτόγον’, Ἡρικεπαῖε, θεῶν πάτερ ἡδὲ καὶ υἱέ’). As Ricciardelli comments, Dionysos may here be intended as either ‘only’ Dionysos or (more probably) both Dionysos and Protogonos.⁹⁵⁸ This kind of expressing the status of the divinity is relevant for the aim of my research, as Morand has observed.⁹⁵⁹ Such a definition of the god appears to recall a circular conception of the divine entity as Robert Parker has hypothesised: “the Orphic myth of succession in heaven takes on a new colour if Protogonos and Zeus and Dionysus are in some sense the same god, if Zeus was implicit in Protogonos and Protogonos reincarnated in Dionysus”.⁹⁶⁰ We have, in fact, focused so far on the figure of Zeus but I would also like in these final remarks to highlight the complexities that lie behind the emerging of one main divinity in different contexts.

As Morand and Parker suggest, we have in this passage a remarkable expression of the conception of a main divinity which recalls features of both Zeus and Dionysus/Protogonos.

⁹⁵⁷ For a detailed analysis of this hymn see Ricciardelli 2000: 432-436 and Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 161-163.

⁹⁵⁸ “Si può intendere in più modi, a seconda che ci si riferisca semplicemente a Dioniso oppure a Dioniso-Protogono: il primo, in quanto nato da Zeus e Persefone, è figlio di dèi, e a sua volta padre di Ermete (57,3); ma più probabilmente bisogna intendere Dioniso-Protogono, nato dall’Etere o dall’uovo deposto dal Tempo da quale discendono tutti gli dèi” (Ricciardelli 2000: 434).

⁹⁵⁹ Morand 2015: 220-222.

⁹⁶⁰ Parker 1995: 494.

The hymn, indeed, does not make explicit reference to Zeus but can be connected to the passage describing the ingestion of the world in the Derveni Papyrus⁹⁶¹ and the re-creation of the *cosmos* by Zeus as narrated in the *Rhapsodies* quoted by Proclus in his commentary on the platonic *Timaeus*:

ὥς τότε πρωτογόνοιο χαδὼν μένος Ἑρικεπαίου
 τῶν πάντων δέμας εἶχεν ἐῆι ἐνὶ γαστέρι κοίλῃ,
 μεῖξε δ' ἐοῖς μελέεσσι θεοῦ δύναμιν τε καὶ ἀλκὴν,
 τοῦνεκα σὺν τῷ πάντα Διὸς πάλιν ἐντὸς ἐτύχθη,
 αἰθέρος εὐρείης ἥδ' οὐρανοῦ ἀγλαὸν ὕψος,
 πόντου τ' ἀτρυγέτου γαίης τ' ἐρικυδέος ἔδρη,
 Ὠκεανὸς τε μέγας καὶ νείατα Τάρταρα γαίης
 καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ πόντος ἀπείριτος ἄλλα τε πάντα
 πάντες τ' ἀθάνατοι μάκαρες θεοὶ ἡδὲ θεάιναι,
 ὅσσα τ' ἔην γεγαῶτα καὶ ὕστερον ὅποσσ' ἔμελλεν,
 ἐν γένετο, Ζηνὸς δ' ἐνὶ γαστέρι σύρρα πεφύκει.⁹⁶²

So then, by engulfing Erikepaios the Firstborn,
 he had the body of all things in his belly,
 and he mixed into his own limbs the god's power and strength.
 Because of this, together with him, everything came to be again inside Zeus,
 the broad air and the lofty splendour of heaven,
 the undraining sea and earth's glorious seat,
 great Oceanus and the lowest Tartara of the earth,
 rivers and boundless sea and everything else,
 and all the immortal blessed gods and goddesses,
 all that had existed and all that was to exist afterwards
 became one and grew together in the belly of Zeus.⁹⁶³

We therefore see here how the Derveni's commentary on the Orphic Theogonies and the passage on the figure of Dionysus/Protogonos as both father and son of the gods from our *Orphic Hymn* 52 might be related, highlighting a possible relationship with the wider

⁹⁶¹ Col. XVI, 1-8. See Morand 2015: 221.

⁹⁶² Fr. 241 F (167 K.) = Procl. *In Plat. Tim.* 29a.

⁹⁶³ Transl. West 1983: 89.

conception of a one main divine figure connected with fatherhood as well as features of ruling and creative powers. This is underlined by West, who also stresses the fact that Protogonos, as well as Zeus, never fully identifies with the world or with the totality of the gods.⁹⁶⁴ Such a reflection on the relationship between the main god, the *cosmos* and other deities appears to be in line with my analysis of the divine figure of the *macranthropos* and the Orphic cosmic god who appears to be ruler and creator of all beings without fully identifying with them in a pantheistic way. Furthermore, all these considerations on the status of the divinity invite me to insert them into the reflective side of our possible Orphic henotheistic manifestation, since I see here a more complex reflection on the figure of the main god (and his relationship with other divinities) also in connection with other Orphic sources or conceptions derived from traditional theogonies.⁹⁶⁵

⁹⁶⁴ West 1983: 89.

⁹⁶⁵ As Morand remarkably concludes “despite the apparent absence of Zeus in the hymn to Protogonos, the myth related to Orphic divine rulers is in the background, as we can observe when taking into account all the different testimonies” (Morand 2015: 222).

5. The Orphic *Hieros Logos*

After having analysed Orphic reflective and intuitive sources in chapters 3 and 4, focusing on Orphic fragments and the *Orphic Hymns*, I would now like to draw attention to one specific single text which was composed around the 2nd century BCE and presents features of Orphic henotheistic elements together with peculiar external influences from different Orphic texts as well as the Jewish tradition. The title *Hieros Logos/Testament of Orpheus* refers to a poem written in Greek and attributed to Orpheus, composed by a Jew around the 2nd century BCE in Alexandria in Egypt. The text appears to be a Jewish imitation of an Orphic ἱερὸς Λόγος where the legendary singer Orpheus professes conversion to the One God of the Old Testament. The author, belonging to the stream of Hellenistic Judaism, aims to glean concepts and images from the religious and philosophical Greek heritage (including many of what we would define as henotheistic sources) in order to show how the belief in one single God also belonged to Greek wisdom, even though in an incomplete way. Only Abraham and Moses, as we shall see, thanks to Chaldean knowledge and the revelation of the sacred law, were able to reach God.

This chapter will focus on the literary, cultural and religious characteristics of this poem, drawing attention to the delicate balance between features of transcendence and, on the other side, immanence which emerge from the varied terminology of the Greek text. Indeed, even though transcendence plays a major role in the poem, it is also possible to find many terms and quotations characterised by Orphic theopantistic hints. An in-depth analysis of these diverse terms, derived both from biblical and Greek sources, will help cast light on the religious and literary relevance of this peculiar *Hieros Logos*. However, before starting examining the text, its relationship with the Orphic tradition and possible henotheistic elements, I would like to begin with a section which introduces the context of formation of

the *Hieros Logos* and one of its first ‘editors’ -the philosopher Aristobulus- in order to better understand its main themes.

5.1 The Context of Formation: Hellenistic Judaism

Παραθήσω δὲ πρώτου Ἀριστοβούλου, τοῦ ἐξ Ἑβραίων φιλοσόφου, τὰς οὕτως ἐχούσας φωνάς· Ὅπως καὶ ὁ πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐξ Ἑβραίων Ἀριστόβουλος ὁ Περιπατητικὸς ἐκ τῆς παρ' Ἑβραίοις φιλοσοφίας ὁμολογεῖ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ὠρμῆσθαι [...].⁹⁶⁶

And I will quote first the words of the Hebrew philosopher Aristobulus, which are as follows. And before us among the Jews also the Peripatetic Aristobulus acknowledges that the Greeks have gleaned from the Jewish philosophy [...].⁹⁶⁷

With these words Eusebius describes Aristobulus, the Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria in Egypt around the 2nd century BCE and was an expert in the Greek philosophical tradition (especially Peripatetic). Keen commentator of the Pentateuch, he represents one of the main exponents of so-called ‘Hellenistic Judaism’ (or ‘Alexandrian Judaism’), a theological and philosophical stream which flourished in Alexandria between the 3rd century BCE and the 1st CE and of which he is considered to be the main representative before Philo.⁹⁶⁸ The philosophical trend of Hellenistic Judaism was characterised -in its varied complexity- by diverse schools and tendencies which demonstrate both a diachronic and synchronic (although essentially homogeneous) development.⁹⁶⁹ It represents a point of contact between Greek philosophy and ancient Jewish wisdom, essentially using allegory⁹⁷⁰ (typical

⁹⁶⁶ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.11.3-13.12.1.

⁹⁶⁷ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 718 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁶⁸ For a complete review of the life and works of Philo I would suggest the thorough bibliographies in Goodhart-Goodenough 1938, Radice-Runia 1988, Williamson 1989, Kamesar 2009 and Runia 2012.

⁹⁶⁹ Scholarly interest in Hellenistic Judaism has strengthened starting from the second half of the 20th century. Among the most important studies I would like to mention Tcherikover 1959, Hengel 1973 and 1980, Bickerman 1988, Gruen 2016.

⁹⁷⁰ On the topic of allegory and allegoresis in both Greek and Jewish contexts see Dawson 1992: 1-126, Ramelli-Lucchetta 2004, Struck 2004: 1-203, Copeland-Struck 2010: 15-38 and Radice 2014.

of Alexandrian exegesis) to read and interpret the biblical text to which a more profound meaning was given and through which it was believed to be possible to reach a deeper knowledge of the divine.

I would like to introduce here, together with Roberto Radice among others, the notion of the distinction between ‘allegory’ and ‘allegoresis’. By ‘allegoresis’ we intend a systematic philosophical allegory, through which it was possible to interpret different kinds of texts and better understand the nature of the divine.⁹⁷¹ I am therefore inclined, in order to have a more complete insight into the philosophical position of both Aristobulus and later Philo, to distinguish between an occasional interpretation of the symbols and, on the other hand, a systematic and philosophically-based one.⁹⁷² As Copeland and Struck clearly define such concepts:

Allegorical interpretation (allegoresis) is understood as explaining a work, or a figure in myth, or any created entity, as if there were another sense to which it referred, that is, presuming the work or figure to be encoded with meaning intended by the author or a higher spiritual authority. [...] Jewish and Early Christian thinkers would build their edifices of exegesis and scriptural allegory on the ancient foundation of esoteric reading. Theirs too was a hermeneutic aimed at the transcendent truths which are concealed in language.⁹⁷³

The two authors also mention the commentator of the Derveni Papyrus as an example of one of the earliest allegorical interpretations of a religious text, namely an Orphic Poem.⁹⁷⁴ This

⁹⁷¹ Radice 2014: 16.

⁹⁷² See Ramelli-Lucchetta 2004: 7.

⁹⁷³ Copeland-Struck 2010: 2-3.

⁹⁷⁴ “In one of the earliest extensive testimonies to allegorical interpretation, the work of the Derveni commentator (fourth century BCE), the key term is ‘enigma’: this commentary presents a cosmological and religious explanation of an Orphic poem, often by bringing etymological pressure to bear on individual names and terms, and finds mystical truths and cultic significance embedded in the poetic language and the figures of myth. At its most fundamental, such allegorizing is a search for esoteric truths, for meaning that is concealed but ultimately interpretable” (Copeland-Struck 2010: 2-3). On the exegetical activity of the author of the Derveni Papyrus, Betegh also observes that “the Orphic poet, with his conception of the temporally prior, generative and unificatory Zeus, had made an important move towards a more abstract conception of divinity,

explanation of the approach toward the interpretation of religious texts is important for the aim of my research since it clarifies the reasons that lie behind Aristobulus' intellectual and literary activity (both when reading the scriptures and reporting our Orphic *Hieros Logos*). It is indeed this very Aristobulus who gives an account of his own activity of interpreter of the *Pentateuch* in one of his fragments:⁹⁷⁵

οἷς μὲν οὖν πάρεστι τὸ καλῶς νοεῖν, θαυμάζουσι τὴν περὶ αὐτὸν σοφίαν καὶ τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα, καθ' ὃ καὶ προφήτης ἀνακεκήρυκται· ὧν εἰσιν οἱ προειρημένοι φιλόσοφοι καὶ πλείονες ἕτεροι καὶ ποιηταὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ μεγάλας ἀφορμὰς εἰληφότες, καθὼ καὶ θαυμάζονται· τοῖς δὲ μὴ μετέχουσι δυνάμεως καὶ συνέσεως, ἀλλὰ τῷ γραπτῷ μόνον προσκειμένοις οὐ φαίνεται μεγαλεῖόν τι διασαφῶν. ἄρξομαι δὲ λαμβάνειν καθ' ἕκαστον σημαινόμενον, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ᾧ δυνατός. εἰ δὲ μὴ τεύξομαι τοῦ πράγματος μηδὲ πείσω, μὴ τῷ νομοθέτῃ προσάψης τὴν ἀλογίαν, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ τῷ μὴ δυναμένῳ διαιρεῖσθαι τὰ ἐκείνῳ νενοημένα.⁹⁷⁶

Those therefore who have a good understanding admire his wisdom, and the divine inspiration in consequence of which he has been proclaimed a prophet; among whom are the aforesaid philosophers and many others, including poets, who have borrowed important suggestions from him, and are admired accordingly. But to those who are devoid of power and intelligence, and only cling close to the letter, he does not appear to explain any grand idea. I shall begin then to interpret each particular signification, as far as I may be able. But if I shall fail to hit upon the truth, and to persuade you, do not impute the inconsistency to the Lawgiver, but to my want of ability to distinguish clearly the thoughts in his mind.⁹⁷⁷

in some respects similar to the one which becomes *a la mode* in Presocratic circles. As he is explaining the mythological narrative, the Derveni author, already acquainted with the later philosophical developments and armed with the toolbox of exegetical techniques, makes a serious attempt to bridge the remaining distance between the two sides" (Betegh 2004: 221).

⁹⁷⁵ As Kraus Reggiani underlined (1973: 164-165), some scholars have denied Aristobulus' role as forerunner of a systematic Alexandrian exegesis. My position would be to disagree with these scholars and consider the philosopher the forerunner (if not initiator) of Alexandrian allegoresis. See also Dawson 1992: 74-82. Dawson distinguishes two processes involved in Aristobulus' interpretative activity: "subordination of the host culture's authoritative authors and their writings and allegorical reading of scripture that attached formerly nonscriptural meanings to scriptural words and narratives" (Dawson 1992: 78-79).

⁹⁷⁶ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.10.4-6.

⁹⁷⁷ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 407 revised and edited by me.

Such an exegetic school differentiated itself from the so-called ‘*midrash*’,⁹⁷⁸ the interpretative school of the Jewish wise men who (mostly in Palestine)⁹⁷⁹ examined the biblical text throughout the centuries in order to draw from it strict moral, liturgical and practical instructions. The term derives from the Jewish root *daràsh* = to investigate, research, study, and designates a wide range of texts: the exegetic enquiry into the Holy Books undertaken by the Hebrew scholars (from antiquity to the 5th century CE), the results of such enquiries and the books that contain them. The *midrashim* that have passed down to us are usually divided based on their different nature: normative (*halakhah*), exegetical, narrative (*haggadah*) or homiletic. The spirit which lies behind all of them is the veneration of Scripture and the willingness to glean religious, moral and practical teachings from it.⁹⁸⁰ Although in both Hellenistic Judaism and Rabbinic interpretations we notice the same willingness to keep the polytheistic perspective sharply separated from the monotheistic one, Hellenistic Judaism opens its doors to Greek philosophical influence, though partly in order to ultimately trace back Greek cultural heritage to ancient Jewish wisdom. While, in fact, the Alexandrian circle aimed to interpret the Bible also through the contribution of Greek terms and concepts -addressing pagans but mostly the Jews of the diaspora who did not feel comfortable with the language of biblical Hebrew anymore⁹⁸¹ – *midrash* will always tend to stay as impenetrable as possible to external influences.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁸ For an in-depth analysis of *midrash*, which I have here just mentioned in order to better contextualise the phenomenon of Hellenistic Judaism, see Kraus Reggiani 1973: 166 and 1982: 95; Porton 1979; Bickerman 1988 (mostly 177-191).

⁹⁷⁹ An in-depth analysis of the relationship between Judaism and Hellenism in the Palestinian milieu can be found in Hengel 1973.

⁹⁸⁰ See Fonrobert-Jaffee 2007: 3-4.

⁹⁸¹ For an introduction to the complex phenomenon of the diaspora I would like to draw attention to Tcherikover 1959, Bickerman 1988 (especially 37-50), Hegermann 1989, Williams 1998, Gruen 2016: 283-312 and the bibliographies which can there be found.

⁹⁸² However, the existence of a so-called ‘hellenistic *midrash*’ (a representative of which Aristobulus might also have been) has also been hypothesised, that is, a union of Greek terminology and philosophy with the most strict and mystical Jewish religiosity. To support this thesis scholars have also proposed a specific passage from one of Aristobulus’ fragments (Eus. *Praep. Ev.* 13.12.13-15) where the philosopher quotes verses from Homer and

I would now like to focus our attention on the main Greek philosophical streams that influenced Jewish Hellenistic authors such as our Aristobulus: the Stoic one and the Peripatetic school (mainly through the treatise *De mundo*). As we have seen these appear to be also two of the main influences on the Orphic fragments and *Hymns* that we have examined in chapters 3 and 4. Since Aristobulus constitutes the main ancient source quoting our Orphic text (containing many supposedly ‘Orphic’ elements, as we shall see), it is interesting to observe how these sources and texts appear to be linked with each other, thus creating an intertextual and inter-cultural relationship that I think has not been sufficiently highlighted so far.

Radice underlines the relationship between Stoicism and Alexandrian allegoresis stressing that Jews in Alexandria felt the need to justify their faith also from a philosophical point of view, firstly in order to defend themselves against charges of superstition and ‘backwardness’, and then shaping a more complex system of interpretation. Regarding the influence of Stoic allegorical reading, Radice observes that the main points of contact are represented by etymology -the main ‘literary’ and grammatical tool to interpret texts- and the philosophical idea of the *logos* in its henotheistic expression, that is a sort of convergence of the divine manifestations into one supreme divine entity.⁹⁸³ The main consequence of the influence of the Stoic allegorical methodology is constituted by the possibility of reading the Holy Book both in a literal and, on the other hand, a more profound way, thus doubling the meaning of Scripture. However, as the scholar observes, the Alexandrian exegetes shifted from a focus on the author of the text (which in their case was considered to be God and the

Hesiod (actually possibly falsified already by Aristobulus’ sources) in order to demonstrate that Saturday was a holy day not just for Jews but also for pagans. See Kraus Reggiani 1973: 175 and 184-185; Dawson 1992: 80-81.

⁹⁸³ Radice considers Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus* to be the fruit of an ‘allegorical sensibility’ (Radice 2014: 26). On Cleanthes’ and the Stoics’ allegoresis see Dawson 1992: 24-38; Ramelli-Lucchetta 2004: 86-96; Struck 2004: 111-141; and Most in Copeland-Struck 2010: 28-35.

prophets) to the content.⁹⁸⁴ We therefore notice the influence of the Stoic school both in terms of methodology (etymologies and allegorical interpretation) and contents, since Alexandrian exegetes also focused on Stoic concepts and ideas that I would define as henotheistic and that in some way get closer to the notion of monotheism. These concepts include, for example, the notion of creation and the unity of the divine.

As I have already noted, the complex phenomenon of Hellenistic Judaism appears to have been characterised by a kind of internal development mainly due to different (and changing) philosophical influences. It seems, in fact, to be possible to trace a transition from a phase (Aristobulus) in which the main influence is represented by the Peripatetic school, to one (Philo) in which the predominant influence is constituted by the Platonic school that will lead to a turning point in terms of a ‘spiritual’ approach to biblical exegesis.⁹⁸⁵ The focus of my analysis will be on Aristobulus who, in the first phase above mentioned, made use of Aristotelian theories and concepts mainly acquired through the *De mundo* in order to read and interpret the Holy Book. It is likely that this tendency to borrow exegetic categories from Greek philosophy was already a trend in the Alexandrian circle, together with the inclination to attribute an undeniable superiority of Jewish wisdom over respectable but questionable external cultures.⁹⁸⁶ Also gleaning important images and ideas from Greek poets and philosophers, Aristobulus claimed to be able to better show the literal sense of the Holy Scripture and in so doing reach a deeper conceptual level, trusting in the ‘philosophical’

⁹⁸⁴ “Gli esegeti-apologeti giudaico-alessandrini – e soprattutto Filone – per il fatto di disporre di un testo rivelato da Dio furono costretti a spostare la loro attenzione dall’autore del libro (che essendo Dio o il suo profeta non aveva certo bisogno di difesa) al suo contenuto che, per l’oscurità del linguaggio, spesso appariva o incomprensibile o decisamente irrazionale” (Radice 2014: 28-29).

⁹⁸⁵ See Radice 1995: 165-182.

⁹⁸⁶ Kraus Reggiani (1973: 165-166) mentions the example of Artapanus, the Jewish historian who lived in Alexandria between the 3rd and 2nd century BCE and who appears to have traced to the ancient Jewish wisdom not only the introduction in Egypt of the arts, hieroglyphics and philosophy, but also the theriomorphic cult (Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.4-6 = FGrH 726F 3 Jacoby). On Artapanus see Denis 1970 (mainly 255-257), Zellentin 2008, Gruen 2016: 437-450.

value of such an exegesis.⁹⁸⁷ The relationship with Greek culture was not, therefore, always conflicting: when Aristobulus tells his readers about how Hellenic poets were inspired by ancient Jewish wisdom he did not mean to accuse them of theft (*furtum*). On the contrary, he appears to be proud of his Jewish cultural heritage having influenced the most acute Greek minds, and proud of the Greek ‘translations’ of the holy texts.⁹⁸⁸

In the five fragments that have come down to us,⁹⁸⁹ preserved by Christian apologists, Aristobulus claims that important figures like Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato were influenced by the Holy Scripture when they talked about the supremacy of a single main divine ruler (and sometimes creator).⁹⁹⁰ The Alexandrian philosopher even hypothesised a translation in Greek of the biblical text before Alexander:

φανερὸν ὅτι κατηκολούθησεν ὁ Πλάτων τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς νομοθεσίᾳ καὶ φανερός ἐστι περιειργασμένος ἕκαστα τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ. διηρμήνευται γὰρ πρὸ Δημητρίου τοῦ Φαληρέως δι' ἑτέρων, πρὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Περσῶν ἐπικρατήσεως, τά τε κατὰ τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν τὴν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου τῶν Ἑβραίων, ἡμετέρων δὲ πολιτῶν, καὶ ἡ τῶν γεγονότων ἀπάντων αὐτοῖς ἐπιφάνεια καὶ κράτησις τῆς χώρας καὶ τῆς ὅλης νομοθεσίας ἐπεξήγησις, ὡς εὐδὴλον εἶναι τὸν προειρημένον φιλόσοφον εἰληφέναι πολλά· γέγονε γὰρ πολυμαθής, καθὼς καὶ Πυθαγόρας πολλά τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν μετενέγκας εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δογματοποιίαν κατεχώρισεν.⁹⁹¹

It is evident that Plato closely followed our legislation, and has carefully studied the several precepts contained in it. For others before Demetrius Phalereus, and prior to the supremacy of Alexander and the Persians, have translated both the narrative of the exodus of the Hebrews our fellow countrymen from Egypt, and the fame of all that had happened to them, and the conquest of the land, and the exposition of the whole Law; so that it is manifest that many things have been borrowed by the aforesaid philosopher,

⁹⁸⁷ Kraus Reggiani 1973: 167.

⁹⁸⁸ See Le Boulluc in Jacob-De Polignac 2000: 62-63.

⁹⁸⁹ Thanks to Clement and Eusebius five fragments now survive out of all Aristobulus' production, what remains of a larger exegetic corpus on the Pentateuch. See later n.1031, along with Walter 1964, Kraus Reggiani 1982, Holladay 1995 and Radice 1995.

⁹⁹⁰ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.4.

⁹⁹¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.1-2.

for he is very learned: as also Pythagoras transferred many of our precepts and inserted them in his own system of doctrines.⁹⁹²

David Dawson has observed this tendency, typical of Hellenistic Judaism in Alexandria, to trace back pagan literary and philosophical sources to the Jewish tradition. He shows the opposition between figures such as Aristobulus and Philo on the one hand, and Hellenistic editors (philologists) on the other:

Alexandrian Jews were not preoccupied with authenticating an authoritative text that was believed to have become corrupted. Rather than attempting to edit old classics for a new age, they were seeking to interpret the new age in light of their own old classic – the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch. Such a reading (and, ultimately, revision) of culture required more than commentary on scripture; Alexandrian Jewish writers of the Ptolemaic period also turned to classical and Hellenistic literary models [...]. Just like the Jewish commentaries on scripture, these Alexandrian Jewish works also sought to revise Hellenistic life and thought in light of the authoritative text of the Greek Pentateuch.⁹⁹³

God is often presented by the Alexandrian author in Aristotelian terms, mainly related to his supremacy over the *cosmos* (being its origin and orderly principle) and in terms of power: the main, fundamental concept is –as we shall see– that of θεῖα δύναμις.⁹⁹⁴ God is represented as motionless, dwelling in heaven but also able to intervene in mortal matters and to set in motion the *cosmos* thus bestowing to it a dynamic order.⁹⁹⁵

It is therefore important to briefly outline the main features of Hellenistic Judaism in order to better understand the literary and cultural milieu in which the original, lost common source of the *Hieros Logos* was written. It was, indeed, according to this will to trace paganism back to ancient Jewish wisdom that the anonymous author(s) decided to compose a poem in which the legendary singer Orpheus professed conversion to the One God.

⁹⁹² Transl. Gifford 1903b: 718 revised and edited by me.

⁹⁹³ Dawson 1992: 75.

⁹⁹⁴ See Radice 1995: 73–95 and Cristina Termini in Kamesar 2009: 100.

⁹⁹⁵ Radice 1995: 39.

It is relevant to notice that the creation of such an Orphic text needed a somewhat accurate knowledge of the Orphic literary corpus. It is, however, also not surprising that the birth of such a poem took place in Alexandria in Egypt, home of one of the richest and most renowned libraries of the ancient world as well as of the gymnasium, and where the Jewish diaspora developed an extraordinarily lively spiritual life.⁹⁹⁶

After a few decades, however, Jewish-Hellenistic thought also moved into a different phase and new tendencies emerged within the trend. The influence of Greek philosophical thought remained essential, with a stress on Platonic influence. The inquiry and methodology of exegesis became more complex and characterised by a more marked spirituality. Philo –its major exponent– appears to reject the concept of divine omnipresence and the demonstration of divine existence based on the *cosmos*, drawing attention to the impossibility of reaching the divine true essence of the transcendent God, not limited to the one described in terms of θεῖα δύναμις.⁹⁹⁷ He therefore proposes to deepen our internal and spiritual dimension, trying to get as close as possible to the divine sphere.⁹⁹⁸ Indeed, he often quotes biblical exegetes from his generation (and before) who were also experts in Greek philosophy, in order to support his allegorical and speculative exegesis.⁹⁹⁹ His approach has also been defined as ‘philosophy of religion’,¹⁰⁰⁰ in which an accurate and introspective interpretation of the Holy Scripture – supported by the mediating role played by the

⁹⁹⁶ Hengel 1980: 101. On Hellenistic Alexandria see also Tcherikover 1959: 344–377; Fraser 1972; Hengel 1980: 85–103; Bickermann 1988: 87–89; Hegermann 1989: 143–145; 162–166; Williams 1998: 15–16, 50–51; Jacob-de Polignac 2000; Maehler 2004; Hinge–Krasilnikoff 2009. Maehler talks about a ‘cultural defensiveness’, that is the foundation of the library and Mouseion by the Ptolemies in order to “preserve and protect their Greekness, their Hellenic identity” (Maehler 2004: 7).

⁹⁹⁷ See Kraus Reggiani 1973, Riedweg 1987: 70–115, Radice 1995: 165–182 and Kamesar 2009: 135–145.

⁹⁹⁸ Philo *Migrat.* 191–196.

⁹⁹⁹ See Kraus Reggiani 1973: 165 n.2 and 1982: 92 n.14.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kraus Reggiani 1973: 167.

Septuagint in his engagement with the Hebrew Bible – leads to the construction of both a philosophical and theological system.¹⁰⁰¹

We may therefore notice how Philo's position appears to be more complex and subtle when compared to that of Aristobulus: if the latter uses a more simple and intuitive allegorical methodology based on the clarification of the main biblical metaphors, Philo makes use of a more advanced speculation and seems to reach a higher exegetic level.¹⁰⁰² In fact, Radice observes that the main focus of the exegesis was not just single words or short episodes anymore, but rather main topics and clusters of ideas such as 'creation' or 'migration' grouped in larger religious, theological and philosophical themes.¹⁰⁰³ Aristobulus' and Philo's positions therefore represent a sort of dividing line internal to the stream of Hellenistic Judaism, and in order to throw light on these diverse positions I would like to mention two modalities in which the two authors interpret the same biblical passage.¹⁰⁰⁴ In a fragment of Aristobulus¹⁰⁰⁵ the image of God's hand is explained in relatively 'simple' terms of divine power, while Philo interprets it as the symbol not only of divine action but also human, as if God was inviting men to get closer to the divine sphere through speculation and righteous conduct.¹⁰⁰⁶

The influence of Hellenic thought in the Alexandrian Jewish milieu can be detected, however, not only in philosophical but also cultural matters. As an example of this contact

¹⁰⁰¹ See Kraus Reggiani 1973: 166-167, Williamson 1989: 144-145.

¹⁰⁰² "Da qualsiasi punto di vista si considerino, i frammenti aristobulei rivelano tutte le oscillazioni di un metodo ancora non maturato. Lo stesso studio semantico della terminologia, considerata nelle sue ricorrenze, dà adito a constatazioni abbastanza significative. L'autore non usa i termini τροπολογία ο ἀλληγορία [...]. Ancora, σῆμα e i suoi derivati si trovano usati con riferimento a elementi singoli, il verbo μεταφέρειν per indicare il senso traslato di un intero concetto. In sostanza Aristobulo non si spinge molto al di là degli strumenti che gli sono forniti dal simbolo e dalla metafora [...]" (Kraus Reggiani 1973: 169). On Philo's allegoric exegesis of Scripture see also Williamson 1989: 144-175; Runia 1990; Kamesar 2009: 65-94.

¹⁰⁰³ Radice 2014: 28-29.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See also Kraus Reggiani 1973: 171.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.10.1-8.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Philo LA 2.89.

between biblical authority and the Greek world I would like to mention here the *Letter of Aristeas*, a pseudepigraphical letter dated back to the 2nd century BCE and composed in a philo-Hellenic Jewish environment.¹⁰⁰⁷ It narrates the birth of the Greek translation of the Bible, the so called ‘Septuagint’ (3rd-2nd century BCE).¹⁰⁰⁸ The anonymous author, taking an apologetic point of view, aims to give value to the Greek version and spread the Jewish religious heritage.

Chronology also plays a fundamental role for Jewish apologists in Alexandria. Some of them, willing to establish a tight link between Greek and Jewish history, even hypothesised a contact between Orpheus and Moses. Artapanus, for example, talks about an identification between Moses and Musaeus in the Greek world and inverts the traditional order Orpheus-Musaeus thus representing Orpheus as one of Moses’ followers:

[...] ταύτην δὲ στεῖραν ὑπάρχουσαν ὑποβιβάσθαι τινὸς τῶν Ἰουδαίων παιδίον, τοῦτο δὲ Μῶυσον ὀνομάσαι· ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων αὐτὸν ἀνδρωθέντα Μουσαῖον προσαγορευθῆναι. γενέσθαι δὲ τὸν Μῶυσον τοῦτον Ὀρφέως διδάσκαλον, ἀνδρωθέντα δ' αὐτὸν πολλὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὐχρηστα παραδοῦναι.¹⁰⁰⁹

[...] And she being not pregnant took a supposititious child from one of the Jews, and called him Moÿsos (Moses): but by the Greeks he was called, when grown to manhood, Musaeus. And this Moses, they said, was the teacher of Orpheus; and when grown up he taught mankind many useful things.¹⁰¹⁰

A few remarks on cult evidence will help us cast light on the background of the complex phenomenon of Hellenistic Judaism, and show some other cases in which Jewish and Greek culture came into contact. Cases of syncretism have been observed¹⁰¹¹ between Greek

¹⁰⁰⁷ On the *Letter of Aristeas* see, among others, Parente 1972; Davies-Finkelmann 1989: 534-548; Bickermann 1988: 101-105 and 319; Gruen 2016: 413-436 and the extensive bibliography which is there cited.

¹⁰⁰⁸ For an ample bibliography on the Septuagint and its cultural context see, among others, Bickermann 1988: 101-116; Davies-Finkelmann 1989: 548-562; Gruen 2016: 413-436.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.3-4 = FGrH 726F 3 Jacoby.

¹⁰¹⁰ Transl. Gifford 1903a: 462 revised and edited by me (for the full text see Appendix item 19). See also Herrero 2010a: 110-111, and on the figure of Moses in pagan sources see for example Gager 1972.

¹⁰¹¹ See Herrero 2010a: 112.

mystery cults and Jewish precepts mainly regarding purification rituals, as in the case of Dionysian groups as well as communities linked with the cult dedicated to the so-called Theos Hypsistos. We have, in fact, previously mentioned Mitchell's observations on the matter, who claimed the existence of a cult related to this particular terminology, which has been influenced (especially in Asia Minor) by Jewish cross-fertilization.¹⁰¹² However, as we have previously observed, Mitchell's position has not escaped criticism and several studies have questioned the applicability of the cult related to the *formula* to such various and different contexts.¹⁰¹³ However, this hypothesis seems to me important to bear in mind in the course of the analysis of the context of Hellenistic Judaism and syncretistic tendencies between Judaism and henotheistic cults, since it shows a milieu of religious interactions developing in terms of 'assimilation', co-existence or -on the other hand- rupture and conflict.

Furthermore, some scholarship hypothesises that the growing importance in Greek and Middle-Eastern pagan communities of the role attributed to righteous moral discipline and purification practices may be linked with strict Jewish religiosity. This may have started from Egypt and, more specifically, from the lively centre of Alexandria, as some magical papyri found in Egypt and reporting the name of 'Iao' (possibly connected with the Jewish 'Yahweh') may demonstrate.¹⁰¹⁴ Such a phenomenon is also traceable to the Palestinian environment:¹⁰¹⁵ here some Bacchic groups even came to identify Bacchus with Jahweh, showing a syncretism that very much preoccupied the Jewish community.¹⁰¹⁶ This is, for

¹⁰¹² Mitchell 1999: 126. See §1.3.

¹⁰¹³ See Belayche 2010 and Chaniotis 2010: 119-120.

¹⁰¹⁴ PGM V, 1-53. See Herrero 2010a: 113.

¹⁰¹⁵ Herrero 2010a: 114.

¹⁰¹⁶ Herrero observes that this may be the reason for the absence of Dionysos from Jewish-Hellenistic literature: "The Orphic tradition does not appear to play any direct role in this process of assimilation and separation, but the tendency to Bacchic assimilations should be borne in mind when attempting to explain the absence of Dionysiac elements from those aspects of Hellenic culture ultimately accepted into Jewish orthodoxy. From its perspective, the most similar is the most dangerous, for it tends most powerfully towards uncontrolled assimilation" (Herrero 2010a: 114).

example, evident in the second book of *Maccabees*, where Antiochus IV Epiphanes, during the conquest of 176 BCE, strengthens the Dionysian cult already present in the area:

On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, the Judeans were taken, under bitter constraint, to partake of the sacrifices, and when a feast of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreathes of ivy and to walk in the procession in honour of Dionysus. At the suggestion of Ptolemy a vote was issued to the neighbouring Greek cities that they should adopt the same policy toward the Judeans and make them partake of the sacrifices and should kill those who did not choose to change over to Greek customs. One could see, therefore, the misery that had come upon them.¹⁰¹⁷

The situation was perceived as dangerous by the local Jewish community, so much so that in the book of *Wisdom*, attributed to Solomon but probably composed in Alexandria between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st CE, the depiction of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan is possibly inspired by the participants in the despised Bacchic rites:

For even the ancient inhabitants of your Holy Land,
because you hated them for practicing the most detestable things-
deeds of sorcery and unholy rites,
merciless slaughters of children,
sacrificial feasting on human flesh and blood –
those initiates from the midst of a pagan ceremony
and parents who murder helpless lives,
you willed to destroy by the hands of our fathers [...].¹⁰¹⁸

The focus on Dionysos in the passages I have just quoted is, I believe, important, although we need to bear in mind that the passages are polemical. The reliability of 2 *Maccabees* as a historical source has in fact been questioned as the level of persecution it describes is not really compatible with Seleucid practice.¹⁰¹⁹

¹⁰¹⁷ 2 Macc 6:7-9. This translation is that of the NETS, found in Pietersma-Wright 2009: 510.

¹⁰¹⁸ Wis 12:3-6. This translation is that of the NETS, found in Pietersma-Wright 2009: 707.

¹⁰¹⁹ On the reliability of 2 *Maccabees* and Seleucid practice see among others Ma 2012; Honigman 2014; Gruen 2016: 333-358. On 2 and 3 *Maccabees*, and on a royal edict of an unidentified Ptolemaic king which mentions an 'Aristoboulos' checking *hieroi logoi* of Dionysian priests see Capponi 2010. Scholars have proposed different

One last, enlightening example will prove to be useful in order to show how the contact between Jewish and Greek culture also happened through the filter of the mythological figure of Orpheus. The legendary singer is, in fact, many times associated with David, king and extraordinary citharist. In the book of *Samuel* we read, indeed, of the magical power of his lyre:

And it happened, when an evil spirit came upon Saoul, that David would take the cinyra and play it with his hand, and Saoul would be relieved, and it was good for him, and the evil spirit would depart from him.¹⁰²⁰

The debated Psalm 151, accepted by the Orthodox Church but generally considered to be apochryphal, can be read both in the Septuagint edition and in one manuscript found in Qumran in the second half of the 20th century and dated between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st CE.¹⁰²¹ The Jewish text of the Qumran version thus describes David in specific terms that appear to recall some of Orpheus' features:

my hands have made an instrument / and my fingers a lyre, / so let me render glory to the Lord, / said I, within my soul. / The mountains do not witness to him, / nor do the hills proclaim; / the trees have cherished my words / and the flock my deeds.¹⁰²²

It is significant that the translation of the Septuagint does not record these last two verses: it seems possible that the translators believed them to be too close to the depiction of the

possible aims of the edict: to unify the mystery cults in Egypt by establishing a unique 'official' cult of Dionysos, to register those who participated in secret mystery rites to limit and control them or -on the contrary- to promote the cult of Dionysos, or to introduce a new tax on priests (Capponi 2010: 115). Capponi argues that the document is to be placed in the context of a general census of property and slaves, and that it belongs to the age of Philometor and Aristobulus. This fascinating hypothesis would reinforce my argument regarding Aristobulus' aims and activity, that is of mediating between Jewish religiosity and Greek philosophical-religious influences among the Jews of Hellenistic (Ptolemaic) Alexandria. However, the debate on the attribution and dating of the edict is still open and I would therefore hesitate to use it as a reliable source.

¹⁰²⁰ 1 Sam 16:23. This translation is that of the NETS, found in Pietersma-Wright 2009: 260.

¹⁰²¹ Ps 151 in 11QPSS. See Herrero 2010a: 115. On Psalm 151 see Sanders 1963, Smith 1981 and Roessli 2008 (especially p. 1026).

¹⁰²² Transl. Sanders 1963: 75.

figure of Orpheus for the biblical text. The power to move through singing and playing the lyre both natural elements and souls of men therefore associates David and Orpheus. This has, indeed, facilitated a spontaneous and intuitive assimilation, mainly starting from the Jewish Hellenistic milieu. Sanders believes that the elimination of the features that most associate Orpheus and David is to be traced back to a more ancient version prior to the Septuagint:

With the psalm we have tentative literary evidence of an Orphic David from hellenized or hellenizing Judaism. [...] The amalgamist or epitomist of the two Q psalms which were reduced to lxx psalm 151 managed to excise completely the Orphic elements as well as to destroy the beauty and integrity of the original. This was probably done in Hebrew before the translation into Greek was made, and it was done outside Qumran.¹⁰²³

5.2 Aristobulus of Alexandria

Before analysing the Aristobulean version of our *Hieros Logos*, handed down to us through the work of Eusebius, it is necessary to spend a few words on Aristobulus' production and the debate around the authenticity of the so called 'fragment' which contains our *Testament of Orpheus*. Today we are able to read only a small part of the presumably ample literary, exegetic and philosophical production of Aristobulus. Indeed, only 5 fragments survive,¹⁰²⁴ preserved by authors such as Clement and Eusebius.¹⁰²⁵ On the quotations of Aristobulus' fragments by Clement and Eusebius Radice observes that Clement often quotes in an

¹⁰²³ Sanders 1963: 85.

¹⁰²⁴ On Aristobulus and his fragments see Walter 1964, Kraus Reggiani 1982 and Holladay 1995.

¹⁰²⁵ Fragment 1 in Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.32.16-18; fragment 2 in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.9.38 -10.1-17; fragment 3 in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.11.3-13.12.1-2; fragment 4 in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.3-8; fragment 5 in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.9-16. For the detailed parallels of the different variants of the five fragments also within the *Praeparatio* and *Stromateis* see Kraus Reggiani 1982.

imprecise way manipulating the text, rarely mentioning the source. Eusebius is therefore our main reliable source in identifying passages from the fragments of Aristobulus.¹⁰²⁶

It is possible to trace to the Aristobulean fragments the exegetic nature of the Jewish philosopher, and the reference to Greek philosophical and cultural influences is also a fundamental part of his production. Since Clement and Eusebius selected the most important passages (even if according to their apologetic aims), we are able to identify some of the most relevant features of his thought and literary strategies. Kraus Reggiani has perfectly outlined the spirit that lies behind Aristobulus' production, divided between the influence of the 'orthodox' *midrash* and the stream of Hellenistic Judaism:

Nell'esegesi aristobulea convergono sostanzialmente due componenti –tipica l'una dell'ebraismo ortodosso, l'altra del giudaismo ellenistico– divergenti tra loro nel metodo interpretativo, ma accomunate dall'individuazione in Mosè del profeta, del legislatore perfetto, dell'unico maestro di sapienza. La prima si ricollega ai *midrashim* delle scuole rabbiniche di Palestina, rigidamente vincolate alle credenze ebraiche tradizionali e del tutto chiuse agli influssi dell'ellenismo. La seconda riflette invece l'opposto atteggiamento del giudaismo colto della diaspora, in ambienti ellenizzati come Alessandria d'Egitto, che consisteva nell'assunzione a modello di quegli aspetti del pensiero greco che si prestassero allo svolgimento di tematiche ebraiche [...].¹⁰²⁷

The influence of Greek philosophical tradition is also found in the central role assumed by terms and themes derived by the Peripatetic school, filtered by the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*. We will analyse the influence of the *De mundo* treatise in the section dedicated to the Greek philosophical features of the Aristobulean version of our *Hieros Logos*. Before examining the text, however, I would like to briefly introduce the debate around the attribution of fragment 4 (and the *Hieros Logos*, which is contained in that fragment) to Aristobulus.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁶ Radice 1995: 43.

¹⁰²⁷ Kraus Reggiani 1982: 95.

¹⁰²⁸ Kraus Reggiani 1982: 94.

The most important charges against the attribution of the Orphic fragment to Aristobulus are mainly brought by the study of N. Walter and are essentially based on chronological and structural instances.¹⁰²⁹ The chronological argument is based on a theory which sees Aristobulus being placed between Clement and Eusebius since Clement does not explicitly quote Aristobulus when reporting the poem. However, the charge is easily refutable making reference to the very work of the two authors: Clement cites Aristobulus in some brief passages thus making it impossible to backdate him.¹⁰³⁰ Another point would be that the Eusebian version of the poem is not found in Clement, who cites it but with different variants (as we shall see).¹⁰³¹ However, it can't be proved that Clement was not aware of the version that would then be reported by Eusebius: as we have noticed before, Clement may have intentionally chosen not to do it and modify the text according to his apologetic aims (*in primis* the demonstration of the Jewish origins of Greek philosophy and culture).¹⁰³²

The other charge, that is the one related to structure, consistency and content, would be that the quotation of the poem appears to be not coherent with the rest of Aristobulus' fragment 4 (the fragment in its entirety can be found in the Appendix, item 32). The inconsistency would be derived from the fact that the figure of Moses, which is very much present in the *Hieros Logos* and in general in Aristobulus' production, does not appear in any other passage of fragment 4. This would be a hint of a successive interpolation of the Orphic poem inside fragment 4 quoted by Eusebius. However, these charges have been refuted by making reference to Aristobulus' own philosophical and religious tendencies.¹⁰³³ Indeed, Aristobulus does not appear to be willing to start a homogenous discourse centred on the figure of Moses. His main aim (also given the references to Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato)

¹⁰²⁹ Walter 1964.

¹⁰³⁰ Clem. *Strom.* 1.15.72.4 and 5.14.97.7. See Radice 1995: 50-54.

¹⁰³¹ Partial parallels for example in Clem. *Strom.* 5.99.3 (= Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.3-5).

¹⁰³² Radice 1995: 50-54. The scholar also underlines the relationship between Clement and Philo, along with the author's strategies when quoting ancient Greek sources.

¹⁰³³ See for example Radice 1995: 55-62 and the bibliography which is there quoted.

seems to be to bestow monotheistic roots on ancient Greek wisdom, here also represented by Orpheus. Furthermore, he appears to quote a text in which a representative of that ancient wisdom announced the extraordinary powers of God, his supremacy over the *cosmos* and his divine features. Aristobulus did this gleaning terms and concepts from Aristotle, without hesitating to interpolate verses in order to better achieve his goals.

Another element of non-reliability of the Orphic fragment would be, according to Walter, the expunging of the terms ‘Δία καὶ Ζῆνα’ from the *Hieros Logos* and Aratus’ text, an intervention which is mentioned by Aristobulus himself at the end of fragment 4. The term Διός, in fact, appears in Aratus while the word Ζεύς is not found in any passage of the *Hieros Logos*; the two terms, however, can be considered as synonyms and mainly referred to Aratus’ text. Furthermore, the term Δία appears in two codices of the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*:¹⁰³⁴ Aristobulus may have, therefore, used those verses to refer to the *Hieros Logos* and Aratus’ fragments.

5.3 The Aristobulean Version of the Text

As we have seen, the text of the *Hieros Logos* is known in two versions, both ascribable to one single lost common source which we can date back to the 2nd century BCE. It has been observed by scholarship¹⁰³⁵ that the anonymous Jewish author of the lost original source intended to glean examples from the Greek literary, religious and philosophical background

¹⁰³⁴ Line 16 of the *Hieros Logos* (Urfassung version, fr. 377 [245 K.]) is: ‘ἀσθενέες δ’ιδέειν διὰ πάντων τὸν μεδέοντα’ that is ‘(mortal eyes) too weak to see the Almighty through all things’. The two *codices* of the *Cohortatio*, however, report ‘ἀσθενέες δ’ιδέειν Δία τὸν πάντων μεδέοντα’ that is ‘(mortal eyes) too weak to see Zeus master of all things’. Although this variant is generally amended, it is however noticeable to observe how it proves the use of the term Δία as an attribute of the divinity in one of the versions of our *Hieros Logos*. See Radice 1995: 231 and Bernabé 2004: 302.

¹⁰³⁵ See Riedweg 1993; Radice 1995; Sfameni Gasparro 2010b.

to show how belief in one single God was also at the base of Greek wisdom, even though in an incomplete way.¹⁰³⁶

The first version we are able to read is the shorter one (26 verses, also known as *Urfassung*, =fr. 377 F [245 K.]) and is reported among others by pseudo-Justin's *De Monarchia* (2.4) and *Cohortatio ad Graecos* (15.1), and Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* and *Stromateis*.¹⁰³⁷ This version is also quoted by Theophilus (*Ad Autolyicum* 3.2). The second, expanded longer version (41 verses, =fr. 378 F [247 K.]) is quoted by Eusebius in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.5), again Clement (*Stromateis* 5.14.123.2-124.1), Theodoret of Cyrus (*Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* 2.30) and the *Tübingen Theosophy* (2.3), which represents the most recent testimony of the text. This second 'extended' version, as we will see, presents some additional parts introduced by Aristobulus which refer to the emphasis on biblical figures such as Abraham and Moses.¹⁰³⁸

The focus of this section will be on this second version quoted by Aristobulus (close in time and space to the lost original version of the text), and on the Jewish Hellenistic milieu of its composition which we have already touched upon in the first section of this chapter. However, we will also have the chance to compare some of the main variants of the two versions in order to appreciate the different literary choices of the two authors. The analysis of the theme of the one and 'unique' divinity which emerges from the features of this *Hieros Logos* is of great importance and particularly relates to the delicate balance between features of transcendence and of immanence which connote the divine in the text. In fact, the peculiar notion of the one God appears to be essentially characterised by the co-existence of two different conceptions of the divinity: on the one hand, a personalistic one due to the

¹⁰³⁶ Riedweg 1993: 44-55.

¹⁰³⁷ *Protrepticus* 7.74 and *Stromateis* 5.12.78; 5.14.126-127; 5.14.133, whose source is probably an anthology of Greek texts with apologetic aims. See Zeegers 1972: 187-189, Herrero 2010a: 182 and 185-186.

¹⁰³⁸ A very useful and thorough introduction to the text can also be found in Holladay 1996: 1-103. For a summary of the debate on the dating of the different versions of the text see Holladay 1996: 60-64.

monotheistic background of the anonymous Jewish author of the lost original source. On the other, a henotheistic Orphic conception (which I am also inclined to define as theopantistic) due to the genuine Orphic literary models. It is, indeed, possible to see references to Orphic formulations and to the so-called ‘theopantistic’ cosmic god. As I have explained in the section on Orphic henotheism,¹⁰³⁹ this henotheistic vision is based on the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, in which the god ‘is’ the *cosmos*, a sort of living, moving and eternal organism which partly (but not wholly)¹⁰⁴⁰ identifies with the world.¹⁰⁴¹ The presence of elements close to Orphic formulations therefore invites me to carefully analyse the theme of divine transcendence as it appears in the *Hieros Logos*. We shall, in fact, see that it would be maybe better to talk about a particular kind of transcendence which always co-exists with a Greek henotheistic perspective. It is therefore my aim to firstly analyse the Aristobulean text in its more significant variants, imbued with Peripatetic influence filtered by the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo*.¹⁰⁴² We will focus in this section on the main literary and formal features, trying to start having a glimpse of what the main nuclei of the poem are.

I will now present the text in the Aristobulean version recorded by Eusebius in the *Praeparatio Evangelica*. The poem can be read in its entirety in the Appendix to this thesis, item 33. The text starts with some verses which represent a ban from divulging the secrets to the non-initiates (lines 1-3):¹⁰⁴³

Φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί, θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι, [...]
 σὺ δ' ἄκουε, φασφόρου ἔκγονε Μήνης
 Μουσαῖ'. ἐξενέπω γάρ ἀληθέα [...]¹⁰⁴⁴

¹⁰³⁹ See §1.5.

¹⁰⁴⁰ See ‘pantheism’ in Hartshorne 2005. On theopantism see Bianchi 1970; 1975: 253-261.

¹⁰⁴¹ Bianchi 1970: 99-100.

¹⁰⁴² See mainly Radice 1995 and Thom 2014 together with the bibliography which can there be found.

¹⁰⁴³ This *formula* has been studied by Bernabé in Bernabé 1996.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 1-4.

I speak to those who lawfully may hear:
close the doors, all you profane, [...]
But you, Musaeus, child of the bright Moon,
lend me your ear; for I have truths to tell [...].¹⁰⁴⁵

These verses, which can be found in other Orphic fragments¹⁰⁴⁶ and in general are a conspicuous part of the Orphic literary corpus,¹⁰⁴⁷ are shared by all the versions of our *Hieros Logos*. This common opening may be due to the fact that this first block of verses, cloaked by a kind of Orphic ‘aura’, could go back to the original nucleus of the Jewish-Hellenistic text. This may therefore have served as an introduction to bestow more literary prestige and poetic ornament on the poem.¹⁰⁴⁸ Furthermore, this *formula* appears to assume the role of seal, σφραγίς. Indeed, as Alberto Bernabé has observed, when the anonymous author of the *Testament* pretends to give an Orphic aura to his work, he ‘marks’ it with a first verse typical of the ancient Orphic texts.¹⁰⁴⁹ Christoph Riedweg brings out this feature in order to support his thesis (shared by me) of the *Testament* being a Jewish imitation¹⁰⁵⁰ of an Orphic ἱερὸς λόγος.¹⁰⁵¹ However, Aristobulus inserts in this block of verses the following expression:

¹⁰⁴⁵ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Frr. 1 F (13+59+334 K.) and 3 F, for which see Bernabé 1996: 18.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Bernabé indeed observes that (1996: 35): “La prohibición de cerrar las puertas a los profanos habría sido en su origen una proclamación mística [...] para una situación concreta, la de impedir que personas no legitimadas para ello pudieran ver u oír determinadas acciones o palabras sagradas realizadas o pronunciadas en la calle. Pero luego, cuando recibe uno u otro de los enunciados que la preceden y se sitúa en el encabezamiento de un texto, perdería su sentido ‘real’ y pasaría a prohibir el acceso de las mismas personas al texto, a la palabra del poeta. Ello implica que se trata de un uso metafórico. El lector del texto no “cierra” físicamente la puerta, sino, en todo caso, deja de leer”.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 500.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Bernabé 1996: 35.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Riedweg significantly entitles one section: ‘Gattung: kein Testament, sondern die Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos’ (Riedweg 1993: 44-54).

¹⁰⁵¹ “Analysiert man das ps.-orphische Gedicht unter diesem Gesichtspunkt [...]. Das Gedicht beginnt mit der erwähnten “Vorrede” (πρόρρησις, vv. 1-2), in der die Uneingeweihten imperativisch von der folgenden Belehrung ausgeschlossen werden. Es dürfte für die Mehrzahl der Mysterieninitiationen charakteristisch gewesen sein, dass ein Kultpriester in einer “Vorrede” öffentlich verkündete, wer zur Initiation zugelassen war und wer nicht, und die letzteren, die *profani*, zum Verlassen des Ortes aufforderte” (Riedweg 1993: 50).

[...] θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι,
φεύγοντες δικαίων θεσμούς, θείοιο τιθέντος
πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ [...].¹⁰⁵²

[...] close the doors, all you profane,
who hate the ordinances of the just,
the law divine announced to all mankind.¹⁰⁵³

The reason why he decided to interpolate these two verses might have been to specify the term βέβηλος. What is clarified here is the notion of ‘non-initiates’: the cultic aspect linked with the exclusion from the initiation (the more ‘predominant’ Orphic aspect) is now mitigated in favour of a shift towards the moral and ethical dimension.¹⁰⁵⁴ The meaning of ‘non-initiates’, ‘profane’, is therefore specified as a loss of adhesion to the divine law posed by the One God for the entire world. The reference to the ‘δικαίων θεσμούς’,¹⁰⁵⁵ furthermore, is of biblical origin¹⁰⁵⁶ and the two verses aim in general at describing, right from the beginning, how the one God has fixed a harmonious order to all things.

I would also like to make here one further observation following Radice’s¹⁰⁵⁷ analysis regarding the relation between Aristobulus’ thought and work, and the Peripatetic *De mundo*. Our two verses recall a passage from the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise which says:

νόμος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἰσοκλινὴς ὁ θεός.¹⁰⁵⁸

In fact god for us is a perfectly balanced law.

The fact that the divine law is one and harmonious is a *fil rouge* in the *De mundo*. According to the author of the treatise the world is permeated by a sort of ‘unitary’ harmony which is

¹⁰⁵² Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 1-3.

¹⁰⁵³ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Riedweg 1993: 82.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Jourdan (2010a: 206) observes that the term “n’a rien de péjoratif. Il renvoie vraisemblablement aux décrets divins et le vers décrit l’attitude des profanes qui les fuient”.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Philo *Her.* 168-169. See Riedweg 1993: 80-82 and Jourdan 2010a: 206.

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Radice 1995: 127-129.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *De mundo* 6.400b, 28. For a critical edition of the text see Lorimer 1933.

the one and only cause of its movement, change and conservation. The god of the *De mundo* is unique not in monotheistic terms (many divine beings are often mentioned in the treatise) but in a cosmological perspective. However limiting this may be from a theological point of view for a Jewish author, this stress on the unity of the law, cause and motion of the world could not have gone unnoticed by a Jewish exegete like Aristobulus, who grounded his faith on the revelation of the one divine law.¹⁰⁵⁹

These first verses therefore show us a possible way in which Aristobulus might have operated and the reasons behind his literary choices. A keen reader of the *De mundo*, he draws from an aspect of the Aristotelian terminology and applies it to a different literary and religious context. Indeed, the attributes and terms which in the treatise are closer to the concepts of the unity of the law and of the divine order are now referred to the One God of the Jewish tradition. Furthermore, it is important to notice how the treatise *De mundo* appears to link both our Orphic *Hieros Logos* and the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*. Right from the beginning we notice a plausible comparison between the two texts in terms of both literary form and contents. It seems to me relevant to observe how these two texts are interconnected in order to support my thesis of the specific choices behind the Orphic features of the *Hieros Logos*: indeed, as we saw in chapter 2, the *De mundo* version of the *Hymn to Zeus* discloses possible clues of henotheistic tendencies.

Proceeding with the analysis of the text we encounter a new attribute of God:

[...] εὖ δ' ἐπίβαινε
 ἀτραπιτοῦ, μοῦνον δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο τυπωτὴν
 ἀθάνατον. [...] ¹⁰⁶⁰

Walk wisely in the way, and look to none,
 save to the immortal Framer of the world. ¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁹ Radice 1995: 128-129.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 7-9.

¹⁰⁶¹ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

The term chosen here by Aristobulus to refer to God is τυπωτής, ‘maker, creator’, while the Urfassung version reports ἄναξ, ‘lord’. The idea of a ‘simple’ mastery over the *cosmos* is therefore substituted by the image of the *cosmos* itself being not only the place in which God exerts his power but also the result of God’s work. The divine activity which is here implied is, however, quite peculiar.¹⁰⁶² The notion of creation which appears in this passage, even though no doubt inserted in a monotheistic background, is described using terms closer to the ones found in Platonic philosophy than to the biblical ones.¹⁰⁶³ Within the Platonic cosmogony, for example, the demiurge or the gods are pictured as divine figures who shape reality:

ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ τούτοις χρόνος ἦλθεν εἰμαρμένος γενέσεως, τυποῦσιν αὐτὰ θεοὶ γῆς ἔνδον ἐκ γῆς καὶ πυρὸς μίξαντες καὶ τῶν ὅσα πυρὶ καὶ γῇ κεράννυται.¹⁰⁶⁴

And when to these also came their destined time to be created, the gods moulded their forms within the earth, of a mixture made of earth and fire and all substances that are compounded with fire and earth.¹⁰⁶⁵

Furthermore, such a description of the creation in ‘Platonic’ terms will be later developed by Philo.¹⁰⁶⁶ It is not my aim to analyse Philo’s complex concept of creation. I would only like to mention here how in Philo the creative process found in the Bible and the demiurgic activity read in the *Timaeus* seem to be mediated. Indeed, Philo appears to draw from the Bible the ultimate monotheistic background and from the *Timaeus* a sort of logical, verbal articulation. The integrated Greek element thus does not undermine the monotheistic claim, but rather tries to support it while better formulating and ‘structuring’ it. This brief comment on the

¹⁰⁶² Riedweg 1993: 82; Jourdan 2010a: 207.

¹⁰⁶³ Gen 1-2.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Pl. *Prt.* 320d. See also Pl. *Ti.* 50c- 51b.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Transl. Lamb 1952: 129.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Philo *Migr.* 103; *Somn.* 2.45. Jourdan (2010a: 208) adds: “L’auteur de la révision du vers s’inscrit sans doute dans une tradition aristotélico-platonicienne qui conçoit la création comme l’œuvre d’un démiurge imprimant à l’univers sensible un modèle intelligible [...]”.

later work of Philo seems to be helpful for the aim of my research since I am tempted to see in Aristobulus and his use of Hellenic terms a sort of germ of this kind of exegesis.

Proceeding with our analysis, we can see at line 9 the insertion of a reference to an Orphic παλαιὸς λόγος:

[...] παλαιὸς δὲ λόγος περὶ τοῦδε φαίνει·
εἷς ἔστ' αὐτοτελής, αὐτοῦ δ' ὕπο πάντα τελεῖται·
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιníσσεται [...].¹⁰⁶⁷

For thus of Him an ancient story speaks:
one, perfect in Himself, all else by Him
made perfect: ever present in His works.¹⁰⁶⁸

Aristobulus probably chooses to quote here the παλαιὸς λόγος in order to emphasise the Orphic aura of the poem and enhance its credibility in terms of authenticity.¹⁰⁶⁹ This expression, in fact, calls to the mind of the reader the way in which Plato introduces the Orphic fragment of the *Hymn to Zeus* in the *Laws*:

ΑΘ. “ἄνδρες” τοίνυν φῶμεν πρὸς αὐτούς, “ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος, ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων ἔχων, εὐθείᾳ περαίνει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος [...].¹⁰⁷⁰

Athenian: Now then, our address should go like this: ‘Men, according to the ancient story, there is a god who holds in his hands the beginning and end and middle of all things, and straight he marches in the cycle of nature [...].¹⁰⁷¹

However, Fabienne Jourdan observes¹⁰⁷² that this *formula* might also refer to some remarkable Old Testament passages such as:

This is what the Lord says—

¹⁰⁶⁷ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 9-11.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Jourdan 2010a: 208.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Pl. *Leg.* 715e-716a.

¹⁰⁷¹ Transl. Cooper 1997: 1402. For the full passage see also §4.2

¹⁰⁷² Jourdan 2010a: 208.

Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.¹⁰⁷³

According to Jourdan this polysemy might be intentional, and I believe this to be possibly another sign of Aristobulus' desire to constantly integrate Hellenic literary traditions (here markedly Orphic) with his religious and cultural Jewish background. Indeed, he appears to state this intention in the passage (quoted by Eusebius) that we have read in the previous section, where he introduces our *Testament* and which we can noticeably relate to our considerations on the unity and harmony of the divine creation, law, and order.¹⁰⁷⁴

Back to our reference to the παλαιὸς λόγος and the *Hymn to Zeus*: we find a similar quotation at the end of our poem:

[...] καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάντα τελευταῖ,
ἀρχὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μέσσον ἡδὲ τελευτήν.
ὥς λόγος ἀρχαίων, ὥς ὕδογενὴς διέταξεν,¹⁰⁷⁵
[...] and governs all on earth,
himself first cause, and means, and end of all.
So men of old, so tells the water-born sage¹⁰⁷⁶

We were presented with the same statement in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* and such an expression therefore seems to emerge as the literary and partly religious inspiration for our *Hieros Logos*,¹⁰⁷⁷ as we shall see in the next section.

Another element linked with the mysteries is found at the end of our text, where the author reaffirms the ban on revealing the secrets to non-initiates:

ἄλλως οὐ θεμιτὸν σὲ λέγειν· τρομέω δέ γε γυῖα·

¹⁰⁷³ Isa 44:6.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.4. See Appendix item 32.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 34-36.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719-720 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1-2.

ἐν νόῳ ἐξ ὑπάτου κραίνει περὶ πάντ' ἐνὶ τάξει.
ὦ τέκνον, σὺ δὲ τοῖσι νόοις πελάζευ ἢ μηδ' ἄπο γε ἢ < ...>
εὖ μάλ' ἐπικρατέων, στέρνοις δὲ ἔνθεω φήμην.¹⁰⁷⁸

Nor otherwise dare I of Him to speak:
in heart and limbs I tremble at the thought,
how He from the highest place all things in order rules.
Draw near in thought, my son; but guard your tongue
with care, and store this doctrine in your heart.¹⁰⁷⁹

It is interesting to stress the theme of 'summit, peak' which emerges at line 39 and which allows us to introduce a kind of transcendence expressed in terms of verticality. About the descriptive term 'ἐξ ὑπάτου', scholarship has proposed to consider parallels on the one hand in the Bible and in other Jewish authors such as Philo, and on the other in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*. The full text of these passages can be found in the Appendix, item 34.¹⁰⁸⁰ The divine epithet of 'most high' is used by the Septuagint, Philo, *De mundo* and Aristobulus. While the Septuagint and Philo render this concept with the word 'ὑψιστος', the *De mundo* and Aristobulus use the term 'ὑπατος'. Radice considers this a sign of the tight link between Aristobulus and the *De mundo*,¹⁰⁸¹ and this reinforces the idea of the kind of intervention, influenced by the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise, which Aristobulus carried out while giving (new) shape to the text.

Other passages of the text also offer such a conception of the divinity: at lines 29-31 and 33-34, as we shall see, God is described as having a celestial location and as being on the top of the whole *cosmos*. This therefore represents a stress on the transcendence of the divinity, a monotheistic feature which attenuates Orphic and immanentistic terms such as the 'περινίσσεται' which I will soon analyse. The co-existence of these two conceptions, however,

¹⁰⁷⁸ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 38-41.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 720 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Gen 14, 22; Philo *LA* 3, 24; Philo *Ebr.* 105; *De mundo* 6.397b, 24-27.

¹⁰⁸¹ Radice 1995: 163.

is precisely the reason why we cannot talk about a fully transcendent description of the divinity but rather of a transcendence which lives together with a henotheistic perspective. This, as I have observed, is due to the literary models and the heterogeneous audience which the anonymous author of the *Hieros Logos* was addressing. Sfameni Gasparro talks about an alternate presence in our text of theopantistic elements and, on the other hand, a biblical creative conception based on the belief in one, transcendent God.¹⁰⁸²

Back in our text we read that God has a powerful hand (‘καὶ χεῖρα στιβαρὴν κρατεροῖο θεοῖο’, l.19), is a ruler (κραίνοντα, l. 22), and is described in terms of self-sufficiency:

εἷς ἔστ' αὐτοτελής, αὐτοῦ δ' ὕπο πάντα τελεῖται·
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιníσσεται, [...].¹⁰⁸³

One, perfect in Himself, all else by Him
made perfect: ever present in His works.¹⁰⁸⁴

Here the term αὐτοτελής substitutes the more ‘difficult’ αὐτογενής of the Urfassung; this is, probably, in order to avoid dangerous immanentistic clues:¹⁰⁸⁵

εἷς ἔστ', αὐτογενής, ἐνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιγίνεται, [...].¹⁰⁸⁶

The last part of the verse is also modified, and the idea of the creative act of God is substituted with the one of completeness, entirety. The verses, however, still hold a residual idea of immanence and local movement of the divinity in the world. Some scholarship, in fact, has seen this as a reference to the Stoic, Platonic and Aristotelian tradition,¹⁰⁸⁷ in which the term

¹⁰⁸² “Una alternanza di visione cosmofoica di marca orfica e stoica, intesa a identificare il principio divino della realtà con il grande Tutto che da lui promana e in lui si riassorbe, e di concezione biblico-creazionistica fondata sulla trascendenza di un Dio personale” (Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 506).

¹⁰⁸³ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 10-11.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Riedweg 1993: 83 n.248, Radice 1995: 129-132 and Jourdan 2010a: 208-209.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 8-9.

¹⁰⁸⁷ See for example Arist. *De harm.* 52 in Thesleff 1965: 52; Euryph. *De vit.* in Thesleff 1965: 85, 15 and 86, 31; Hypp. *De felic.* in Thesleff 1965: 94, 16; Iambl. *Theol. Arithm.* fr 3, 18 de Falco.

αὐτοτελής refers to the first principle.¹⁰⁸⁸ The features of the divinity that are here underlined are, therefore, those of unity and self-sufficiency, together with its being present in the world by ‘wandering’ in it. However, we can observe how in the Urfassung version the variant bestows a kind of ‘cosmosophic’ aura to the poem, by describing how the god generates himself and the *cosmos* around him. Aristobulus, on the other hand, tries to modify the verses in order to make them more in tune with the Jewish vision, substituting περιγίνεται with περινίσσεται in order to attenuate the radicality of God’s presence in the world. The term περινίσσεται maintains indeed a residual idea of immanence and local movement of the creator: this appears to remind us of the immanentistic (and possibly Stoic) expressions I have previously mentioned.

The assertion of the absolute superiority and transcendence of the divinity is, nevertheless, stated in a very evocative passage (lines 29-33) in which God is represented as seated on a golden throne while extending his right hand over land and sea:

αὐτὸς δὴ μέγαν αὖθις ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται
 χρυσεῷ εἰνὶ θρόνῳ· γαίῃ δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ βέβηκε·
 χεῖρα δὲ δεξιτερὴν ἐπὶ τέρμασιν Ὠκεανοῖο
 ἐκτέτακεν· ὁρέων δὲ τρέμει βάσις ἔνδοθι θυμῷ
 οὐδὲ φέρειν δύναται κρατερὸν μένος [...].¹⁰⁸⁹

But God Himself, high above heaven unmoved,
 sits on His golden throne, and plants His feet
 on the broad earth; His right hand He extends
 over Ocean's farthest bound; the foundation of the hills
 trembles in its deep heart nor can endure
 his mighty power [...].¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸⁸ Radice (1995:130-132) analyses the parallels with *De mundo* 6.398b, 10-11, Philo *LA* 2.1-2 and *Spec.* 3.188.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 29-33. Please note that the term ‘αὖθις’ does not appear in the Urfassung. Riedweg 1993 observes that Aristobulus may have wanted to insert here a decisive contrast between these verses (about the celestial and transcendent nature of God) and the previous ones.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 720 revised and edited by me.

Such a representation is influenced by well-known biblical passages,¹⁰⁹¹ such as *Isaiah*

This is what the Lord says:

‘Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool’.¹⁰⁹²

However, this image calls to the mind of the attentive observer also some *formulae* found in Greek literature, most of all Homer and Hesiod.¹⁰⁹³ The picture of the brazen heaven (reported as a variant in the *Urfassung*)¹⁰⁹⁴ is, in fact, a Homeric epithet¹⁰⁹⁵ and always in Homer we read of a golden throne.¹⁰⁹⁶ The image of the trembling of the mountains is also found both in the Bible¹⁰⁹⁷ (as Clement reports introducing this very verse of our *Hieros Logos* in the *Stromateis*)¹⁰⁹⁸ and in the Greek literary works of Homer and Hesiod.¹⁰⁹⁹ It is therefore interesting to notice how this block of verses is inspired by the will to describe God according to some representations in which biblical and traditional Greek literary cross-references are constantly intertwined.¹¹⁰⁰

At lines 11-12 we read:

[...] οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
εἰσοράαι ψυχὴν θνητῶν, νῶι δ' εἰσοράαται.¹¹⁰¹

By mortal eyes unseen, by mind alone
discerned.¹¹⁰²

¹⁰⁹¹ Isa 66:1; Ps 99:5.

¹⁰⁹² Isa 66:1.

¹⁰⁹³ See Riedweg 1993: 68.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 17-18: “οὗτος γὰρ χάλκειον ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται / χρυσέωι εἰνὶ θρόνῳ, γαίης δ' ἐπὶ ποσσὶ βέβηκε”.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Il.* 5, 504 and 17, 425; *Od.* 3, 2.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Il.* 8, 442. We also find images such as the golden sceptre and floor: *Il.* 1, 15 and 374, and 4, 2.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Isa 64:1-2; Ps 17:8.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.124.

¹⁰⁹⁹ See Riedweg 1993: 69.

¹¹⁰⁰ Riedweg 1993: 64.

¹¹⁰¹ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 11-12.

¹¹⁰² Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

Aristobulus states the possibility to ‘catch’ the essence of the divine (even though in an incomplete way),¹¹⁰³ according to a principle that we also find in Platonic philosophy.¹¹⁰⁴ This is another important difference from the Urfassung version of the poem, where it was not possible to see God (who, on the other hand, can see everything).¹¹⁰⁵ We can see in this passage the introduction of the difference between soul (ψυχή) and intellect (νούς), a distinction which is found also in Aristotle¹¹⁰⁶ and the *De mundo*.¹¹⁰⁷

In the following lines –added by Aristobulus– we read about Orpheus’ desire to reveal the ‘footprints’ (ἵχνια, l. 19) of God creator in the *cosmos*:¹¹⁰⁸

τέκνον ἐμόν, δείξω σοι, ὅπηνίκα {τὰ} δέρκομαι αὐτοῦ
ἵχνια καὶ χεῖρα στιβαρὴν κρατεροῖο θεοῖο.¹¹⁰⁹

The footsteps and the strong hand of mighty God
whenever I see, I'll show them you, my son.¹¹¹⁰

We can notice how the representation of God’s hand is also found in Aristobulus’ fragment 2¹¹¹¹ in order to better depict the concept of divine δύναμις, already a central part of the *De mundo*.¹¹¹² The insertion of such a word may therefore be due to the Aristotelian terminology familiar to Aristobulus.

At lines 20-21 we encounter the image of a cloud impeding God’s vision; such a representation is also found in the Urfassung version but is here expanded with some cosmological and astronomical remarks:

¹¹⁰³ Jourdan 2010a: 209.

¹¹⁰⁴ Pl. *Phdr.* 247c-d, *Ti.* 28a. See Riedweg 1993: 83-84.

¹¹⁰⁵ Fr. 377F (245 K.), 15-16: “πᾶσιν γὰρ θνητοῖς θνηταὶ κόραι εἰσὶν ἐν ὅσοις, / μικραὶ, ἐπεὶ σάρκες τε καὶ ὅσ τεα ἐμπεφύασιν, / ἀσθενέες δ’ ἰδέειν διὰ πάντων τὸν μεδέοντα.”

¹¹⁰⁶ Arist. *De an.* 413b.

¹¹⁰⁷ *De mundo* 1.391a, 8-13.

¹¹⁰⁸ See Radice 1995: 135-149.

¹¹⁰⁹ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 18-19.

¹¹¹⁰ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹¹¹¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.10.1-8.

¹¹¹² See Radice 1995: 73-95.

αὐτὸν δ'οὐχ ὁρώ· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται
λοιπὸν ἐμοί· 'σταῖσιν δὲ δεκάπτυχον ἀνθρώποισιν.¹¹¹³

But Him I cannot see, so dense a cloud
in tenfold darkness wraps our feeble sight.¹¹¹⁴

This appears to be an image of biblical origin which thus allows the anonymous Jewish author to draw the attention of the reader to the monotheistic and Jewish *facies* of the text.¹¹¹⁵

The representation of the divine invisibility through the image of the thick cloud is, however, known also in Greek epic poetry, as the *Iliad* shows.¹¹¹⁶ This might therefore be another example through which we can observe the presence of images in the text which are of clear biblical origin but that were nonetheless also known and familiar to Greek readers.¹¹¹⁷

Furthermore, the 'expanded' version of Aristobulus can also be read bearing in mind the *De mundo* conception according to which the sky is represented as divided in ten concentric spheres that separate man from God.¹¹¹⁸ Once again the Peripatetic philosophical background of Aristobulus can clarify the reasons that lie behind the decision to add a passage of an astronomical nature.

We find at this point the first of the two most relevant variants of our Aristobulean version, which incorporates in the original lost common source two fundamental figures of the Jewish tradition. It is possible to consider many features of the One God mentioned up until now as strongly influenced by Peripatetic philosophy. However, it is also essential to bear in mind Aristobulus' desire to stress the Jewish identity of the text, in order not to forget

¹¹¹³ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 20-21.

¹¹¹⁴ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

¹¹¹⁵ We found, indeed, the image of the pillar of cloud in Ex. 13, 21-22; 19, 16-18; 24, 15-17; 33, 10; Num. 12, 5.

¹¹¹⁶ *Il.* 14, 350 and 15, 153.

¹¹¹⁷ For the analysis of epic elements in our *Hieros Logos* see Riedweg 1993: 64-73.

¹¹¹⁸ *De mundo* 2.392a, 16-23 and 31-34; 392b, 5-8 (see later and Appendix item 36). Radice (1995: 141) notably observes that "la differenza fra i due contesti, quello dello pseudo-Orfeo e quello di Filone, oltre che nella diversa partizione del mondo, sta soprattutto nella diversa collocazione di Dio rispetto al cosmo: immanente nel primo caso e trascendente nel secondo".

the aim of its composition: to show the dependence of the Hellenic wisdom on the Jewish one, and mark the superiority of monotheism here attributed to Orpheus. At line 22 the first of these two biblical figures appears:

οὐ γάρ κέν τις ἴδοι θνητῶν μερόπων κραίνοντα,
εἰ μὴ μουνογενῆς τις ἀπορρώξ φύλου ἄνωθεν
Χαλδαίων· ἴδρις γὰρ ἔην ἄστροιο πορείης
καὶ σφαίρης κίνημ' ἀμφὶ χθόνα ὥς περιτέλλει,
κυκλοτερῆς ἐν ἴσῳ τε κατὰ σφέτερον κνώδακα.¹¹¹⁹

Him in His power no mortal could behold,
save one, a scion of Chaldean race:
for he was skilled to mark the sun's bright path,
and how in even circle round the earth
the starry sphere on its own axis turns¹¹²⁰

The 'Scion of Chaldaean race' here quoted is Abraham¹¹²¹ to whom Aristobulus attributes the features of both seer (the only one able to see God) and of expert in the movement of the stars.¹¹²² The representation here implied is that of an elevation towards the divine through the study of the celestial phenomena. A general interpretation of the text, in a sort of 'allegorical' perspective, may be of a kind of itinerary towards God in which the final stage is represented by astronomy.¹¹²³ The only one able to accomplish this task appears to be Abraham, that is to say a wise man belonging to the Jewish people: the pagans are therefore excluded by this final stage,¹¹²⁴ and Orpheus himself states this at line 20: 'αὐτὸν δ' οὐχ ὁρώω'.

¹¹¹⁹ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 22-26.

¹¹²⁰ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719-720 revised and edited by me.

¹¹²¹ Clement also identifies this figure with Abraham (Clem. *Strom.* 5.14.123-124). Jourdan observes how the figure might also refer to Moses (Jourdan 2010a: 219-220), but eventually opts for the identification with Abraham. See also Riedweg 1993: 86-88.

¹¹²² See Radice 1995: 51.

¹¹²³ Radice 1995: 143-144.

¹¹²⁴ Jourdan 2010a: 218.

This passage is followed by observations of an astronomical nature (ll. 24-25) which on the one hand refer to the Aristotelian cosmology,¹¹²⁵ and on the other present biblical echoes that clarify the underlying Jewish spirit:

πνεύματι δ' ἡνιοχεῖ περί τ' ἡέρα καὶ περὶ χεῦμα
νάματος· ἐκφαίνει δὲ πυρὸς σέλα † τα δε ἱφι γεννηθῆ †.¹¹²⁶

And winds their chariot guide over sea and sky;
and showed where fire's bright flame its strength displayed.¹¹²⁷

Aristobulus may, indeed, make reference to a passage in the Bible in which God descends on Sinai and interprets it as a representation of God's direct intervention in the world.¹¹²⁸ Some scholarship has, furthermore, proposed to integrate the possible explanation of these verses placing them also under the influence of the meteorological and astronomical theories of the *De mundo*.¹¹²⁹ In so doing, these verses would also assume the nature of a sort of 'scientific counterpart' of the biblical passage.¹¹³⁰ Once again the Jewish *substratum* and the Peripatetic influence seem to be merged, thus shaping the peculiar representation of the divine which emerges from this interpolated version of our *Hieros Logos*.

At line 36 we see the second biblical figure, an important addition to the original text of the *Hieros Logos*:

ὥς λόγος ἀρχαίων, ὡς ὕδογενὴς διέταξεν,
ἐκ θεόθεν γνώμησι λαβὼν κατὰ δίπλακα θεσμόν.¹¹³¹

So men of old, so tells the water-born sage,

¹¹²⁵ *De mundo* 2.391b, 19 -392 a-b.

¹¹²⁶ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 27-28.

¹¹²⁷ Transl Gifford 1903b: 720 revised and edited by me.

¹¹²⁸ Deut 4:12.

¹¹²⁹ *De mundo* 4.395b, 3-9. The term 'σέλας' is also in Homer: *Il.* 17, 739 and *Od.* 21, 246.

¹¹³⁰ 'Una prova scientifica del passo biblico' (Radice 1995: 145-149). Here the scholar also analyses parallels between Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, *De mundo* and our *Hieros Logos*.

¹¹³¹ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 36-37.

taught by the twofold tablet of God's law.¹¹³²

The figure is clearly Moses; what is still to be made clear is the reason why Aristobulus chose to interpolate this 'Jewish addition',¹¹³³ besides the evident prestige bestowed on the text by the reference to the Mosaic tradition. According to Radice this addition might require an allegorical explanation, to be placed against the background of Alexandrian exegesis.¹¹³⁴ In the introduction to his version of the *Hieros Logos*, as we have seen before, Aristobulus indeed illustrates how we should interpret the voice of God just as Moses has spoken of the whole creation.¹¹³⁵ God's intervention is here understood and interpreted as the principal divine act, that is the creation of the world. The theme of creation is therefore here juxtaposed to that of revelation of the Law and such a perspective seems to introduce (and in some way justify) this 'Jewish addition' to the *Hieros Logos*.¹¹³⁶ The creation is here presented through the 'filter' of the episode of the revelation narrated in *Exodus*.¹¹³⁷ These verses can thus be enclosed in a coherent block in which Aristobulus shows how Moses expressed God's creative activity and sovereignty; the same sovereignty that is stated in the *formula* 'Himself first cause, and means, and end of all'.

What is interesting to notice now is, however, the reasons that lie behind the choice of the anonymous author of the *Hieros Logos* (and later Aristobulus) to imitate an Orphic poem in order to address both his pagan and Jewish audience. Why did they choose to make reference to the Orphic corpus, and in particular to some Orphic passages taken from the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*? The aim of the next section will be to try to answer these questions focusing on the philosophical and religious contents of the text. My aim will therefore be to

¹¹³² Transl. Gifford 1903b: 720 revised and edited by me.

¹¹³³ Radice 1995: 157.

¹¹³⁴ Radice 1995: 157-161.

¹¹³⁵ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.3.

¹¹³⁶ Radice 1995: 158.

¹¹³⁷ Exod 32:15-16. Radice (1995: 157-161) believes he can observe a parallel between this passage and *De mundo* 6.399b, 23-25, also related to the theme of the ἔργον θεοῦ here and in Philo.

cast light on the reasons behind the choice of the Orphic tradition and on the religious interactions between Jews and pagans in Hellenistic Alexandria. I will, furthermore, try to understand if we can talk about real interactions between the two and/or if we should rather move within the field of reflective beliefs and intellectual activities.

5.4 The *Hieros Logos* and the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*

As I noted in the previous section, it is surely possible to find evident ‘Orphic’ elements in the text derived for example from the *Hymn to Zeus*. On the other hand, however, these elements are so much fused in the body of the text and in the culture of its anonymous author (and of Aristobulus) that our main aim will be to understand to what extent we can talk about real, substantial differences. In fact, it might be better to talk about a diverse, complex Hellenistic cultural background in which the biblical and Hellenic elements are embedded in the mind of both the author(s) and the readers of the texts.

Discussing Orphic elements would mean highlighting *formulae* and concepts that certainly influenced the text from the outside but were also integrated in the religious and cultural milieu of its composition. Analysing its features related to the divine therefore constitutes another step towards the understanding of Orphic elements in different philosophical and religious contexts. Can we talk about clear and distinct ‘genuine’ Orphic elements? My answer would be that yes, we can talk about Orphic elements and *formulae*. The point is that they appear to be merged with other philosophical and religious elements in different contexts every time we encounter them in different texts, so much so that Orphism seems to be ‘adapted’ every time according to the religious background in which it is inserted.

It is therefore now time to focus on the divine status of the one God in our two texts. I would like to first highlight the fact that the co-existence of two different conceptions of the divinity –that is a monotheistic one due to the Jewish background of its composition, and the

theopantistic one due to the influences of the Orphic literary corpus– make the *Hieros Logos* a fascinating and peculiar text. Such a ‘coexistence’ does not seem to allow us to talk about a complete ‘transcendence’ in the text, but rather transcendence that lives together with various philosophical influences and a theopantistic perspective.¹¹³⁸

Having started by analysing some of the most important features of the Aristobulean version of the text, it is time to address the main question of the chapter: how this poem fits in my analysis of Orphic henotheistic texts. Indeed, as we have seen in the case of the Orphic fragments and in the *Orphic Hymns*, we can observe here how the Orphic literary and religious stream is employed in different ways according to the context of text-formation. Furthermore, we have observed how the Orphic stream absorbs other philosophical influences, such as Stoic, Aristotelian, Platonic and before that Pre-Socratic. In this case, I would argue that the text of the *Hieros Logos* represents one of these ‘Orphic variations’ in which the Orphic elements, filtered through some texts such as the *Hymn to Zeus*, are merged with the Jewish elements thus creating a new expression of the Orphic literature inserted in the Hellenistic Alexandrian context. One of the main issues that we tackled in the previous chapters, and that we face once more now, is to understand how the Orphic corpus has been shaped over time by the influence of different philosophical and literary traditions. Furthermore, this corpus has been adapted to different contexts in different periods of time, and in this case the Orphic literary and religious Greek heritage overlaps with the Hellenised background of Alexandrian Judaism. Scholarship has underlined ‘Orphic features’ in this text

¹¹³⁸ “Tra le [...] connotazioni distintive delle due posizioni teologiche si pone [...] la nozione della radicale trascendenza rispetto alla creazione del Dio giudaico e cristiano e il suo forte spessore personalistico a fronte del delicato equilibrio fra trascendenza e immanenza che qualifica la natura e le operazioni del ‘dio sopra tutti’ delle varie formule di ambito pagano. Quest’ultimo infatti talora assume più o meno forti i tratti di un ‘dio cosmico’ e la sua personalità si stempera sia in direzione della trascendenza, una volta che si accentui più o meno radicalmente il carattere di ‘primo principio’ intellegibile, innominabile e inconoscibile, sia in direzione dell’immanenza cosmica, quando -secondo il modello stoico- lo si configuri come principio divino razionale, pervasivo dell’intera realtà. È pur vero che rimangono spazi ampi di comparabilità fra i due versanti sotto il profilo tipologico e sotto quello storico” (Sfameni Gasparro 2003a: 125).

but to what extent can we talk about ‘genuine’ Orphic elements as opposed to Jewish ones? And to what extent can we hypothesise that the anonymous author of the *Hieros Logos* ‘believed’ or ‘didn’t believe’ in the religious formulations used in the text?

It has been observed how the movement of Alexandrian Judaism went through different phases but was in general characterised by a degree of unity, in the sense that the Jewish cultural and religious background of the different authors (Aristobulus, Philo...) was deeply Hellenised, imbued with the Hellenic elements absorbed by various philosophical and literary sources. It therefore makes sense to ask the question if we can speak of a ‘pseudo-Orphic’ text, and whether we can link this poem with the supposedly ‘genuine’ Orphic literary corpus or not. Different scholars have given different answers to these questions, although indirectly. Radice, for example, argues that the argumentative structure of the *Hieros Logos* and that of the *Hymn to Zeus* are analogous, since in both texts we are presented with the image of the god being the beginning, middle and end of all things. What differs are the tools to get access to the text and interpret the *formula*: the Bible for Aristobulus and Plato for the *De mundo* version of the *Hymn to Zeus*.¹¹³⁹ My aim is to examine different approaches to the problem in the light of my analysis of Orphic henotheistic sources, arguing that the Orphic literary stream -in which different philosophical traditions flowed- was absorbed by the Alexandrian authors and incorporated in their cultural, philosophical and religious views. References to Orphic literary *formulae* bring about philosophical and religious meaning, being incorporated into the background of the author(s) of the *Hieros Logos*. We should therefore be careful using the terminology ‘pseudo-Orphic’, since I would be inclined to insert this text in the stream of Orphic (henothestic) literature, although with necessary *caveats*.

¹¹³⁹ Radice 1995: 162.

Let us then analyse the main religious features that emerge from the text, representing the result of such a unique mixture and ‘confluence’ of Hellenic features and Alexandrian background. As I noted in the analysis of the *Hieros Logos*, we can see at line 9 the reference to an Orphic παλαιὸς λόγος.¹¹⁴⁰ The choice of the insertion of the παλαιὸς λόγος was probably due first of all to the willingness to emphasise the Orphic aura of the poem and enhance its credibility in terms of authenticity.¹¹⁴¹ This expression, in fact, calls to the mind of the reader the way in which Plato introduces the Orphic fragment of the *Hymn to Zeus* in the *Laws*.¹¹⁴² However, we have seen how Jourdan observes¹¹⁴³ that this *formula* might also refer to some remarkable Old Testament passages.¹¹⁴⁴ I believe this to be possibly another sign of Aristobulus’ will to constantly integrate Hellenic literary traditions (here Orphic) with his religious and cultural Jewish background. It is therefore interesting to wonder to what extent we are able to separate the two ‘souls’ of this text. This passage, like others which we will soon analyse, shows how the Orphic reference discloses other possible interpretations and is embedded in the cultural background of its Alexandrian Hellenistic composer. Orphism is thus merged with various elements (Aristotelian references, Jewish clues) to create a complex text in which the pagan element is integrated in a wider picture although, in my opinion, still maintaining some distinct features.

Back to our reference to the παλαιὸς λόγος and the *Hymn to Zeus*: in fact, we find a similar quotation at the end of our poem:

[...] καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάντα τελευταῖ,
 ἀρχὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μέσσον ἡδὲ τελευτήν.
 ὥς λόγος ἀρχαίων, ὥς ὑδογενὴς διέταξεν,¹¹⁴⁵

¹¹⁴⁰ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 9-10.

¹¹⁴¹ Jourdan 2010a: 208.

¹¹⁴² Pl. *Leg.* 715e-716a.

¹¹⁴³ Jourdan 2010a: 208.

¹¹⁴⁴ Exod 3:14; Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6; 45:5-6.

¹¹⁴⁵ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 34-36.

[...] And still above the heavens
alone He sits, and governs all on earth,
himself first cause, and means, and end of all.
So men of old, so tells the water-born sage.¹¹⁴⁶

We were presented with the same statement in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* and such an expression therefore seems to emerge as the main literary and religious inspiration for our *Hieros Logos*. We have stressed in chapter 3 the importance of the formulation of the divine entity in terms of beginning, middle and end used to express the totality of the divinity. In the Orphic text, in fact, we read:

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένετο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀργικέραυνος·
Ζεὺς κεφαλὴ, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται.¹¹⁴⁷
Zeus was the first, Zeus last, the lightning's lord,
Zeus head, Zeus centre, all things are from Zeus.¹¹⁴⁸

Such a theopantistic formulation refers to a sort of 'vertical' conception of the divinity in which the god is described in terms of head and body, upper and lower part.¹¹⁴⁹ This conception of the divine, however, differentiates itself from an expression we find in our *Hieros Logos*:

εἷς ἔστ' αὐτοτελής, αὐτοῦ δ' ὕπο πάντα τελεῖται·
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιníσσειται [...].¹¹⁵⁰
One, perfect in Himself, all else by Him
made perfect: ever present in His works.¹¹⁵¹

¹¹⁴⁶ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 720 revised and edited by me.

¹¹⁴⁷ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1-2.

¹¹⁴⁸ My translation.

¹¹⁴⁹ Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 1-2, 11-12, 22-23, 26-27, 29-30.

¹¹⁵⁰ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 10-11.

¹¹⁵¹ Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me.

Such an expression, ‘ever present in His works’ (or better ‘roaming, wandering’), recalls an immanentistic and theopantistic conception but with a slightly different hint. Indeed, in this case the theopantistic expression appears to be more ‘circular’, in the sense that the divine is all around and absorbs the *cosmos* so much so that -according to the image- it ‘wanders’ around the *cosmos*. The divinity therefore appears here to dominate reality partly identifying itself with the world: something different from the description of superiority linked with a separate and higher position stated in other passages. We thus meet one of those Orphic traits¹¹⁵² that are merged with the Jewish background of the text and constitute its peculiarity.¹¹⁵³

We might also want to take a step forward and observe how in the Urfassung version of the text¹¹⁵⁴ the terms αὐτοτελής and περινίσσεται are substituted with the more philosophically and religiously connotated αὐτογενής and περιγίνεται,¹¹⁵⁵ thus stressing even more the immanentistic atmosphere of the passage. The divinity is described, in fact, as both origin and immanent part of reality, something that may recall our observations on the similarity between the theopantistic view of the divine entity and the pantheistic view of the Stoics. As I have already stated in this dissertation, I would not define Orphic religious formulations as pantheistic. However, similarities can be underlined and inserted in the general absorption of Hellenic (here Orphic and Stoic) features in the complex picture of the Alexandrian text. The religious expressions that the author(s) of the *Hieros Logos* put forward are not ‘simply’ contrasting with the biblical formulations but rather integrated in a new literary and religious poetical form. Although I would be cautious about simply associating Orphic fragments with our *Hieros Logos* I think we could trace our poem to the Orphic henotheistic stream of literary tradition, thus making it part of the Orphic corpus.

¹¹⁵² Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 501.

¹¹⁵³ See Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 500-502 and 507-508.

¹¹⁵⁴ *De mon.* 2.4 and *Coh. Gr.* 15.1.

¹¹⁵⁵ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 8-9.

On the two souls of the text, Sfameni Gasparro observes that in the version of the *Hieros Logos* reported in Clement's *Protrepticus*¹¹⁵⁶ we find two important variants, represented by the elimination of the reference to the παλαιὸς λόγος and the definition of God as self-generated and generating all beings (εἷς ἔστ', αὐτογενής, ἐνὸς ἕκγονα πάντα τέτυκται). These two variants, which Clement shares with the Urfassung version of the text, on the one hand attenuate the Orphic aura of the poem but on the other accentuate the 'cosmosophic' perspective, suggesting the idea of a one god that generates all beings instead of the classic biblical notion of the creative activity of God.¹¹⁵⁷ We are therefore presented with one of those underlying Orphic traits¹¹⁵⁸ that, indeed, appear difficult to clearly separate from the rest of the poem and instead seem to be merged with its general religious perspective. The anonymous author of the *Hieros Logos* (and Aristobulus afterwards) was likely deeply immersed in the religious and cultural background of Hellenistic Alexandria, where Jewish and Hellenic traditions merged into a new, complex and articulated religious environment. The notion of the creative activity of the divinity, for example, seems to be more influenced by Greek material (both Orphic and Platonic) but at the same time lives together with the implicit biblical image of God seated on the golden throne. The overall text challenges the notion of a fixed, 'normative' Orphic corpus and invites us to redefine what we mean by 'genuine' Orphic literature.

However, we should not forget that changes occur in the different versions of the text depending on the source that 'filtered' the text. As we have seen, Christian authors later slightly modified the poem in order to insert some variants according to their intellectual and religious needs. Clement, for example, stresses the monotheistic elements modifying some passages of the text such as verse 13:

¹¹⁵⁶ Clem. *Protr.* 7.74.

¹¹⁵⁷ Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 503.

¹¹⁵⁸ Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 501.

οὐδέ τις ἕσθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγάλου βασιλῆος.¹¹⁵⁹

there is no one except the Great King.¹¹⁶⁰

As we have previously underlined, possible pantheistic implications are avoided by describing God as seated in heaven on a golden throne, extending his right hand over land and sea.¹¹⁶¹ Biblical and Hellenic references are so constantly intertwined that Sfameni Gasparro talks about a

tipica alternanza di visione cosmo-sociale di marca orfica e stoica, intesa ad identificare il principio divino della realtà con il grande Tutto che da lui promana e in lui si riassorbe, e di concezione biblico-creazionistica fondata sulla trascendenza di un Dio personale. [...] le diverse prospettive di un 'dio cosmico', che fonda la dialettica dei contrari, e del Dio personale biblico che sovraneamente domina gli eventi naturali e la storia umana, datore in maniera imperscrutabile per l'uomo di punizioni e di benefici, sembrano comporsi nella visione dell'autore.¹¹⁶²

We should not forget that throughout the poem it is always Orpheus speaking, the legendary singer of the old Greek tradition, although converted to monotheism. We therefore define the divine status of God/god as fluctuating between transcendence (evident from the quotations listed above and given by the Jewish background of the authors) and immanence, due to the Greek influences on the poem. The two aspects, however, do not seem completely separate and somehow coexist and are merged into one complex and fluid product of Alexandrian Hellenism.

Back to our analysis of the two texts: I would like to stress that the divine figure which emerges from the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* reflects the features that we have previously attributed to the theopantistic cosmic god. Such a conception of the divinity is based on the

¹¹⁵⁹ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 13. Aristobulus writes: 'οὐδέ τις ἕσθ' ἕτερος. σὺ δέ κεν ῥέα πάντ' ἐσορήσω, / αἶ κεν ἴδῃς αὐτόν [...]' (fr. 378 F [247 K.], 16-17).

¹¹⁶⁰ My translation.

¹¹⁶¹ Fr. 377 F (245 K.), 17-20 and fr. 378 F (247 K.), 29-31, 33-34, 39.

¹¹⁶² Sfameni Gasparro 2010b: 506 and 500.

correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, in which the one god is the *cosmos* but at the same time transcends it and generates it.¹¹⁶³ This peculiar nuance of an immanentistic conception is not, however, identical to the one that we have seen emerging in the *Hieros Logos*. The exclusivist and transcendent side of the divinity appears to be constantly re-affirmed,¹¹⁶⁴ but how does it coexist with the Greek elements linked with immanence and multiplicity? I would like to stress the fact, indeed, that within the theopantistic conception divine multiplicity is never called into question but rather traced back to the original unity in Zeus, centre of the *cosmos* and of history, symbol of wisdom and power.¹¹⁶⁵ The main difference between the two texts appears to be, therefore, the fact that Zeus' power not only determines his superiority but also identifies with the body of the universe: the divinity does not dominate the *cosmos* because he is separate and complete (as in biblical terms) but leads it precisely because he is part of it.¹¹⁶⁶

It is interesting to note, however, that although still in a theopantistic view of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, Porphyry (whom we read in Eusebius) tries to underline the transcendental dimension of the god when commenting on the *Hymn*,¹¹⁶⁷ thus recognising the complexity of the conception of the divine entity. We see how the divinity is once again inserted in reality:

Ζεὺς οὖν ὁ πᾶς κόσμος, ζῶον ἐκ ζώων καὶ θεὸς ἐκ θεῶν.¹¹⁶⁸

Zeus is therefore the whole *cosmos*, living among the living and god among god.¹¹⁶⁹

At the same time, however, Porphyry underlines the role of the *voûs*:

¹¹⁶³ See Bianchi 1970: 99.

¹¹⁶⁴ Frr. 377 F (245 K.), 13; 378 F (247 K.), 29-30, 38-39.

¹¹⁶⁵ Bernabé 2009: 63.

¹¹⁶⁶ Bernabé 2009: 73-74.

¹¹⁶⁷ Porph. *De sim.* fr. 3 Bidez.

¹¹⁶⁸ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.9.3.

¹¹⁶⁹ My translation.

Ζεὺς δὲ καθὼ νοῦς, ἀφ’ οὗ προφέρει πάντα καὶ δημιουργεῖ τοῖς νοήμασιν. [...] βασιλεὺς γὰρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ δημιουργικὸς νοῦς.¹¹⁷⁰

Zeus in so far as he is the νοῦς, from which he gives birth to all things and moulds through his thoughts. [...] Indeed, the creative νοῦς is the ruler of the *cosmos*.¹¹⁷¹

Zeus is thus νοῦς, intellect, creative sovereign mind which gives order to the universe and is part of that universe itself. What seems to be evident here is the stress on the double dimension of the divinity, that is his immanence and transcendence. As Bianchi has observed, Porphyry’s Neoplatonism focuses on the intelligible principle of reality, a divine entity which is cosmic (in the world) but also transcendent.¹¹⁷²

These observations on a Neoplatonic comment on the text of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* underline how the ‘dual’ complexity of the text was already perceived by ancient philosophical commentaries. Such a complexity is reflected also in the *Hieros Logos*, and this is the reason why, in my opinion, it is important to analyse the relationship between these two texts not only in terms of literary and formulaic borrowing but also in terms of religious and philosophical complexity. I would indeed argue that, rather than trying to distinguish two separate souls within the text of the *Hieros Logos* (one biblical/monotheistic and one Orphic/pagan), we should consider the poem as a product of a religious and philosophical environment which in turn is influenced by the already present double nature of the divinity found in (for example) the *Hymn to Zeus*.

A deeper analysis of the Alexandrian environment and how religiosity was lived and perceived by some of its most important philosophers may help cast light on the issue. This is also linked with the insertion of the *Hieros Logos* in the number of ‘Orphic’ texts and the modalities of such inclusion, since understanding how Orphism was perceived in 3rd-2nd century BCE Alexandria means also clarifying the Orphic nature of our poem. As we have

¹¹⁷⁰ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.9.3, 5.

¹¹⁷¹ My translation.

¹¹⁷² Bianchi 1975: 257-258.

seen, scholarship has focused in the past on the two different souls of what we call ‘Alexandrian Judaism’, that is the Jewish one and the Hellenic one. I would still make use of the abstract category of ‘Alexandrian Judaism’, even though with care and clarifying that such a category needs to be rooted in the cultural and religious background and not just in the philosophical reflection of a few authors. As Anders Petersen has stated

A Hellenism-Judaism dichotomy lurks behind so much traditional scholarship on Alexandrian Judaism. On the one hand, different Jewish voices of Alexandria are emphasised as Jewish, that is in contradiction to the neighbouring culturally and socially ‘ethnic’ voices like Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians. On the other hand, the very same Jewish voices are conceived of in terms of an allegedly Hellenistic tone that is derived from an implicit opposition to a normatively perceived Jewish identity corresponding with a spectre of Judaisms found in the Palestinian geographical area. [...] The use of a dualism like the Hellenism-Judaism dichotomy in understanding cultural entities is problematic by the essentialism endorsed by the model.¹¹⁷³

The complexity of the relation between these two elements, the Jewish and the Greek one, can be also be applied to Orphic elements as Herrero has rightly observed.¹¹⁷⁴ The allegorical interpretation of the biblical texts through categories borrowed from Greek thought could be used, for example, as a parallel to understand the process that lies behind the religious manifestation expressed in the text of the *Hieros Logos*. As the Jewish and Greek elements seem to permeate one another in the allegorical interpretation, so are those elements in the composition of literary and religious texts. These two intertwined elements clearly appear in the religious and philosophical expressions which emerge in the *Hieros Logos* and in Aristobulus’ fragments.¹¹⁷⁵ Earlier in this section I have posed the question of how we can interpret religious statements in the *Hieros Logos* and to what extent the

¹¹⁷³ Petersen in Hinge-Krasilnikoff 2009: 123-124.

¹¹⁷⁴ “The strict boundaries set by orthodoxy and apologetics are artificial, and it is not unlikely that users of many of the Orphic-Jewish syncretistic texts were in fact Jewish themselves, or very close to Jewish communities” (Herrero 2010a: 113).

¹¹⁷⁵ For a possible ‘concrete’ validation in terms of his social and religious activities see Capponi 2010: 119-120.

author(s) of the poem believed in what they were saying. I would argue that the philosopher and intellectual who wrote this poem believed, of course, in a one God conceived in general monotheistic terms but such a belief was also deeply influenced by Greek philosophical conceptions. This particular feature of some streams of Alexandrian Judaism shapes a peculiar kind of belief, in which monotheistic and Hellenic (here Orphic) terms are profoundly interwoven. This does not mean, of course, that the authors were not monotheistic, but rather that this monotheism was imbued with (in the case of Aristobulus) Peripatetic and indirectly Orphic formulations and to some extent beliefs. As Radice has observed, for example, Aristobulus' theology appears to be closer to the pair 'earth/sky' and the Peripatetic cosmology, found also in the *De mundo* and its version of the *Hymn to Zeus*:

L'impressione [...] è che Aristobulo in teologia non facesse riferimento ad una forma di trascendenza assoluta (ontologica), ma relativa, secondo la polarità terra-cielo, e ciò in linea con una particolare lettura cosmologica del *De mundo*.¹¹⁷⁶

Aristobulus, in acquiring and manipulating the text of the *Hieros Logos*, appears to be interested in some specific features of the divinity which we find both in the *De mundo* and in the *Hymn to Zeus*: the power of god's δύναμις, the attention attributed to the creation of the world, the fact that god is both in and ruling over the *cosmos*. God's main features are his unity, his self-sufficiency, his creative activity, his being present in the world and his invisibility (or, better, his being visible only to the mind). For a list of the most important parallels between the Aristobulean version of the *Hieros Logos* and the *De mundo* please see the Appendix to this thesis, item 35.¹¹⁷⁷

The *De mundo* is indeed extremely important for the aim of my research since the main theme of the treatise is precisely the relationship between god and the *cosmos*, namely divine

¹¹⁷⁶ Radice 1995: 13.

¹¹⁷⁷ *De mundo* 6.397b, 13-27; 399b, 19-25; 400a, 3-9.

transcendence and immanence. Its main aim as a cosmo-theological text¹¹⁷⁸ is to explain how god may be given the role of begetter and ruler of the world (being responsible for its order and movement) while maintaining its self-sufficiency and transcendence. A solution offered by the author of the text would be to distinguish between divine essence (οὐσία, which remains separate from the created world) and power (δύναμις, involved in the running and movement of the *cosmos*) thus avoiding Stoic immanentistic positions. This of course must have appeared extremely interesting to Alexandrian Jewish philosophers (such as Aristobulus) and also has connections with the issues addressed in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*. As Thom has stated: “*De mundo* is more strictly ‘monotheistic’ than the Platonic and Neopythagorean texts; in *De mundo* one single god, acting through his power, is the cause of everything that happens in the cosmos”.¹¹⁷⁹ The way *De mundo* was read by Jewish Hellenistic philosophers is relevant to this research as it shows the complex relationship between the Jewish Hellenised world and the Greek philosophical and religious tradition.

As I hope to have shown, Aristobulus’ aim was to demonstrate how Greek philosophy derives from the old Jewish tradition, thus incorporating the Hellenic tradition into the Hebrew one. Some of the main concepts of the *De mundo* and of Orphic texts (possibly the *Hieroi Logoi*) appear to be integrated into the new text so that, for example, the idea that God’s power emanates throughout the world and permeates everything represents a clear similarity with the *De mundo*, along with the descriptions of the fiery elements of reality and some astronomical notions. We find for example in the text the willingness expressed by Orpheus (that is, Aristobulus) to show the ‘footprints’ (ἵχνη, l. 19) of God in the universe.¹¹⁸⁰ We could observe how the depiction of God’s hand is also found in Aristobulus’ fragment 2¹¹⁸¹

¹¹⁷⁸ As Thom 2014: 107 has defined it.

¹¹⁷⁹ Thom 2014: 115.

¹¹⁸⁰ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 17-19.

¹¹⁸¹ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.10.1-8. See Kraus Reggiani 1973: 171.

in order to better describe the concept of divine δύναμις, a key one also in the *De mundo*.¹¹⁸² These verses may therefore be inspired by some Peripatetic influences derived from Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian texts.

Another influence derived from the *De mundo* may be found in verses 20-21, where the biblical image of the cloud impedes God's vision. However, while in the Urfassung version the verses only report this representation, Aristobulus adds a relevant part to this section:

αὐτὸν δ' οὐχ ὁρώ· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται
λοιπὸν ἐμοί· 'στᾶσιν δὲ δεκάπτυχον ἀνθρώποισιν.¹¹⁸³

But I do not see him, for in my way a residual, encircling cloud has been fixed
and ten layers of obscurity stand over men's vision.¹¹⁸⁴

Such a representation of the universe may be read as influenced by the one of the *De mundo*, in which we find the *cosmos* as divided in ten concentric spheres that separate man from God (the passage can be found in the Appendix, item 36).¹¹⁸⁵ We may therefore be able to give an explanation to this astronomic addition which would be otherwise quite obscure.

Philosophical influences on Aristobulus, and possibly on the anonymous author of the *Hieros Logos*, have been identified as mainly related to the Peripatetic and Stoic schools.¹¹⁸⁶ As Radice observes, the argumentative structure of our *Hieros Logos* and that of the *De mundo* is analogous.¹¹⁸⁷ It is debatable, however, whether Aristobulus distinguished between divine power and essence (as the *De mundo* does) or not. The philosopher, for example, offers an

¹¹⁸² See Radice 1995: 69-95.

¹¹⁸³ Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 20-21.

¹¹⁸⁴ Transl. Holladay 1995: 167.

¹¹⁸⁵ *De mundo* 2.392a, 16-23; 31-34; 392b, 5-8.

¹¹⁸⁶ Discussing Aristobulus' philosophical outlook, Holladay affirms that "his use of what appears to have been the stock Stoic definition of wisdom, his reference to the pervasive power of God, his inclusion of lines from Aratus, and perhaps his reference to 'the inherent law of nature' are enough to indicate Stoic influence" (Holladay 1995: 73).

¹¹⁸⁷ Radice 1995: 162.

exegesis of the biblical passage of God's descent onto Mount Sinai,¹¹⁸⁸ also gleaned concepts from *De mundo* such as the denial of God's corporeality and divine power as permeating the entire world also using the image of the immortal fire. However, Aristobulus does not appear to differentiate clearly between divine essence and power. Furthermore, his insistence on the presence of God in the world (something that is stressed also in the *Hieros Logos*) appears to be in contrast to *De mundo* when the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise marks the non-corporeality of God and does not mention his omnipresence.

As Gregory Sterling has observed in his article on philosophy and Alexandrian exegesis, the issue is the extent of the influence of Western philosophy on Jewish thought: "Did Hellenistic philosophy serve as more than a veneer or a point of comparison? Did it actually transform the way that Jews thought about important issues? And, if it did, were the views that Hellenistic philosophy shaped accepted by more than a handful of intellectuals?"¹¹⁸⁹ Trying to answer the last question specifically also prompts us to think about the audience of our *Hieros Logos* and the influence of Hellenic expressions of religiosity not only on Alexandrian intellectuals but also on a broader audience.

As has been demonstrated, we find both Peripatetic¹¹⁹⁰ and Stoic influence on the work of Aristobulus, both in the exegetic passages of his fragments and in the text of the *Hieros Logos*. As for the Stoics, Sterling has argued that Aristobulus acquired the knowledge of the Stoics at a popular level rather than at a highly intellectual one. Indeed, we find reference in his fragments to Stoicizing definitions of philosophy and wisdom,¹¹⁹¹ as well as a mention of Aratus.¹¹⁹² Sterling also believes that Aristobulus' main aim was to interpret the Scriptures as

¹¹⁸⁸ Clem. *Strom.* 6.3.32.3-33.1.

¹¹⁸⁹ Sterling 2009: 71.

¹¹⁹⁰ Riedweg 1993 and Radice 1995.

¹¹⁹¹ See Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12. Holladay and Sterling follow Walter's suggestion that the passage should be understood within the context of Stoic cosmology, and that the cosmic order/principle (and its sevenfold structure) is the way through which we gain knowledge of the divine (see Holladay 1995: 230-232).

¹¹⁹² Right after the quotation from the *Hieros Logos*: Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.6; Clem. *Protr.* 7.73; *Strom.* 5.14.101.

rational, using philosophy to better articulate and back his allegorical interpretations.¹¹⁹³

Sterling concludes that

Aristobulus put his efforts to work most extensively in the understanding of the divine [...] He distinguished between God's transcendence and his immanent power and offered anti-anthropomorphic interpretations. [...] Aristobulus did not have a narrow understanding of God. He replaced the names Δίς and Ζεύς with θεός in the pseudo-Orphic poems without modifying the context since "their meaning relates to God" (frg.4). What may be affirmed of Zeus may thus be affirmed of the God of Israel. The basis for this identification is his understanding of the transcendent nature of God. His God is no longer the national God of Israel, but a God that is closer to the philosophical understanding of the divine.¹¹⁹⁴

Although I would not fully agree with Sterling's statements about Aristobulus' intervention on the text of the *Hieros Logos*, his words are certainly extremely important for our understanding of the attitude of Jewish thinkers towards Hellenic material.

To conclude, I would observe that the final outcome might be considered as an understanding of the God of the Jewish tradition as influenced by the Greek philosophical and possibly partly religious tradition. The understanding of the divine therefore includes expressions borrowed from the Aristotelian and Stoic tradition which already influenced Orphic texts. Jewish philosophers appear to have perceived God also in philosophical terms, finding different ways in which to conceive and explain God's transcendence and his relation with the *cosmos*. Aristobulus, for example, chose to make reference to the Aristotelian tradition and its main concepts such as the divine δύνανμις while Philo, for example, refers more to the Platonic and Middle-Platonic tradition. This way of understanding the divine is so embedded in their exegetical and didactic work that we might not be able to actually separate the two souls of these authors, that is the Jewish and the Hellenic one. This relates also to their writing activity and I would argue that the Orphic tradition, which here finds

¹¹⁹³ Sterling 2009: 78.

¹¹⁹⁴ Sterling 2009: 78.

expression in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* and is imbued with several philosophical traditions, had been incorporated in their philosophical and religious arguments to create a thought-through system.

I would therefore also argue that Orphic *formulae* and religious expressions would not have sounded like forgery to the ears of the author(s) of the *Hieros Logos* or to their audience, but rather the outcome of the Alexandrian Hellenistic intellectual and complex religious environment. These authors represent an elite, but it has been proved that this exegetical and literary activity may have been circulating among a wider audience: even though the philosophical and religious framework and background may not have been known to everybody, these ideas were probably so much embedded in the exegetical traditions that people from Alexandria would have been familiar with them even at a less ‘reflective’ level.¹¹⁹⁵ As I have tried to show, the Alexandrian *Hieros Logos* is therefore an important example of how Orphic henotheistic texts and ideas were known and received by people from different places and times.

¹¹⁹⁵ “A number of these traditions surface in a range of Second Temple Jewish and Early Christian texts. For example, 2 Enoch and the Fourth Gospel both appear to know a Platonizing tradition of creation. The Hellenistic Synagogue prayers and the Corinthians both appear to know Stoicizing and Platonizing traditions that deal with the creation of humanity” (Sterling 2009: 98).

Conclusions

This analysis started with an introduction, definition and contextualisation of the research field, that is ancient Greek henotheism with specific regard to Orphism, Orphic theopantism and the debate around so-called ‘pagan monotheism’. The intertwining of a historical-comparative and cognitive approach, thanks to which I distinguished between more intuitive and non-committal beliefs and more deliberate reflective beliefs throughout the dissertation, has proved to be a helpful and fruitful way to address the issue of henotheistic elements in Orphic texts.

Firstly, it has been necessary to provide a definition of the term ‘henotheism’ together with an outline of what has been written about henotheism and the way this phenomenon has been studied by previous scholarship. I have first described the birth of this terminology with Max Müller, stressing how his contribution enhanced the debate around different and more complex forms of religious devotion in various religious contexts, recognising the unity of the divinity as the foundation of henotheistic manifestations. I have then proposed to categorize the pagan sources which I identified as henotheistic according to a distinction between a tendency on the one hand to ‘hierarchise’ the divine and, on the other, to ‘fuse’ the divine entity or ‘unify’ it, in a way that may be defined as ‘syncretistic’.

As concerns the first henotheistic ‘hierarchic’ tendency, I observed how the most relevant characteristic of the supreme divinity appears to be its uniqueness, being the result of a sort of ‘extraction’ of the one god from the many or -to put it another way- a sort of ‘raising’. These divine beings -the ‘many’ opposite to the *deus summus*- are not, therefore, explicitly denied (as in monotheistic claims) nor left in the background, but instead their value seems to be ‘paradoxically’ increased, their existence being highlighted even if because of their lower status. This vertical divine hierarchy finds evidence especially in more reflective philosophical speculation, and a few examples of this tendency –Xenophanes,

Plato's *Timaeus*, Porphyry and Maximus of Tyre- have been analysed in a section dedicated to philosophical reflections on oneness.¹¹⁹⁶

Such a hierarchic and vertical theological scheme happens to be the opposite of another one which finds evidence mainly in cultic and eulogistic manifestations, and that is represented by a 'centripetal' tendency that drives the cult to focus on one divine figure which temporarily absorbs names, characteristics and roles normally belonging to other divine entities. This second attitude to the divinity therefore expresses the unity of the 'one god' of the henotheistic cult, more than its uniqueness as *deus summus*. Three *formulae* have been identified as the most used in henotheistic ritual contexts, that is εἷς θεός, μόνος θεός and θεὸς ὑψιστος; these formulations have been examined in a specific section on henotheism in more intuitive contexts, such as ritual and cult.¹¹⁹⁷

I have then illustrated how scholars approached the theme of henotheism, divine unity and Orphism, examining the works of Herrero de Jáuregui, Harrison, Guthrie, Finkelberg and Bernabé. Other terminologies have also been taken into examination such as monism (Mendoza and Alderink) and theopantism (Bianchi), a term which I have also embraced in the analysis of the Orphic Zeus defined as a 'cosmic god'.

The debate on the term 'pagan monotheism', used to refer to forms of monotheism supposedly traceable to religious expressions in Late Antiquity and first found in the volume *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, published in 1999 by Athanassiadi and Frede and later in *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* by Mitchell and van Nuffelen, has been at the heart of my discussion in the last section of the chapter on methodological considerations.¹¹⁹⁸ After having reviewed some of the most important contributions of the two volumes, I observed how restricting it seems to use a terminology so deeply linked to Jewish and

¹¹⁹⁶ See §1.4.

¹¹⁹⁷ See §1.3.

¹¹⁹⁸ See §1.6.

Christian theologies characterised by a divine uniqueness which cannot be ultimately found in henotheistic formulations. And it is not only about divine uniqueness: other features of religious tendencies that are usually recognised as being properly ‘monotheistic’ are, for example, a radical transcendence, the notion of creation and a personalistic conception, exclusivism, individualism and universalism, all characteristics that cannot be found in most of what I call ‘henotheistic’ pagan manifestations. I therefore concluded that I am inclined to distance myself from the use of a ‘strong’ terminology linked to monotheism to refer to different pagan contexts, since monotheisms *stricto sensu* could be described in terms of a negation of the many in favour of the One, more than the reduction of the many into one. The term henotheism, with the different connotations that I have illustrated in the chapter, was my chosen typology to analyse the religious phenomenon examined in the thesis as applied to Orphic sources.

As for the reception and transmission of Orphic ‘fragments’, I have argued that the selection carried out by the authors which I have examined in this analysis mainly focuses on Orphic texts that I define as ‘henotheistic’. The Orphic henotheistic phenomenon is in fact filtered by the Christian authors through specific apologetic strategies: while I have observed that ‘assimilation’ is often too simplistic and difficult to clarify, isolate and contextualise from a historical point of view, other paradigms such as coexistence, continuity, change and abandonment seemed to be more appropriate as they bring together previous and later traditions in a relatively flexible and –to some extent– fluid way. Thanks to these apologetic strategies Christian authors selected specific henotheistic sources –mostly speculative even if with intuitive features– in order both to incorporate the prestigious ancient Greek wisdom into their own tradition and at the same time show the superiority of the new faith.

The *De Monarchia* and *Cohortatio ad Graecos* show a similar attitude towards our Orphic sources sharing a common atmosphere of ‘monotheistic memory’, where divine unity is traced back to a distant (and to some extent manipulated) past. Marcellus, for example,

selects three Orphic texts in which he is able to identify a special attention given to one main divinity, and therefore quotes them in order to illustrate how even part of the Orphic tradition professed the belief in a (imperfect) kind of divine unity.¹¹⁹⁹

In the *Protrepticus*, Clement harshly condemns pagan rites and practices (Orpheus here becomes a ‘deceiver’ possessed by daemons, commemorating false gods and violent deeds), but also later attributes an important role to part of the Greek philosophical tradition – that of preparing the Gentiles to receive the Christian message, which represents the true philosophy and religion. By selecting and quoting lines from the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos* (which I have later defined as an Orphic henotheistic text) at the end of the treatise Clement transforms Orpheus into the protagonist of a sort of ‘recantation’, ‘palinode’.

The *Stromateis* later represent a constant comparison between the ‘pagan’ past and the Christian present, a dialogue between the ‘true philosophy’ of the new religion and Greek philosophy (the wisdom of the Orphics) which prepares the Gentiles for the reception of the Christian message. The *Hieros Logos* is therefore again quoted by Clement in the *Stromateis* although with important variations and omissions due to the fact that the author later decided to avoid a terminology which could have dangerously sounded as though it had immanentistic hints.¹²⁰⁰

Also Eusebius, in the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, chooses to quote precisely the fragment in which the Hellenistic philosopher Aristobulus reports the Orphic *Hieros Logos* with the aim of proving how some of the most important Greek ‘intellectual’ figures, including Orpheus, were inspired by the ancient Jewish wisdom. I suggested that it is possible to identify and analyse three different ‘authorial’ levels in this source. The first (and oldest) is represented by the original text of the *Hieros Logos* composed by an anonymous Jewish philosopher and poet. The second level is constituted by the version of the 3rd/2nd century BCE Alexandrian

¹¹⁹⁹ §2.2.

¹²⁰⁰ The analysis of Clement can be found in §2.3.

philosopher Aristobulus who chose to quote our text in the so-called ‘fragment 4’, modifying and expanding it also according to his philosophical tendencies, as seen in chapter 5 of the dissertation.¹²⁰¹ Lastly, the third and most recent argumentative level is represented by Eusebius who quotes Aristobulus’ version in order to give value to the antiquity and superiority of the Jewish religion, of which Christianity was thought to be the completion. As my analysis has highlighted, Eusebius goes one step further stressing an argumentative turning point, justifying the presence of elements of divine truth in pagan philosophy (and our Orphic texts) as indeed a ‘*praeparatio evangelica*’, thus showing a theological and philosophical subordination of knowledge.¹²⁰²

This apologetic strategy applied to Orphic texts is also traceable to the works of Cyril of Alexandria who, as I have demonstrated, selected two highly reflective henotheistic Orphic fragments as they conveyed an idea of divine unity and uniqueness which serves the purpose of closing the gap with the Greek literary and cultural tradition while at the same time subordinating it to Mosaic wisdom and ultimately to the Christian revelation.

The analysis of the Christian reception of the Orphic sources examined in the thesis highlights how the selection operated by Christian authors should be taken into account when describing the different fragments and the way they have been classified by modern scholarship. I argued that the ‘henotheistic’ features of these fragments are indeed the reason why they have been selected by Christian apologists, but these ancient scholars have in turn influenced the way we read those texts. Remembering this literary dynamic process has therefore been key to properly frame the analysis of the Orphic texts later examined.

The core of the dissertation has then been the examination of Orphic more ‘reflective’ sources, namely the most important Orphic fragments whose features and nature I believe can be illuminated if described as revealing henotheistic elements. Firstly, I have analysed

¹²⁰¹ §5.3.

¹²⁰² §2.4.

the divine figure of Zeus as creator and supreme divinity as it emerges in the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, a hymn-like Greek text dedicated to Zeus and handed down in four versions dated from the 5th to the 1st century BCE.¹²⁰³ As I have illustrated, the poem appears to be a unique case in which a text shows features of intuitive beliefs (traces of the hymnodic ritual genre) while mostly remaining a reflective source, that is a theogony re-elaborated by authors whose scope was probably to narrate and convey a religious view with a high degree of awareness and speculation. The poem thus appears to be a complex and thought-through hymn set in a cosmogonic and theogonic reflective context, presenting features of both types of texts. Zeus is here represented as beginning (principle), centre and end of the world, of which he epitomises also the divine artisan and ruler. The god appears to be an immanent part of that world but also a transcendent creator: he is in control of time, both present and future, and identified with the personification of destiny (fate).

This main divinity is described as being both origin (first) and ruler. The god also holds the supremacy and origin of the divine family after having defeated and given new birth to the previous generations of gods, thus offering a new start to the theogonic and cosmogonic history: he absorbs and (re)creates the whole universe. I have argued that what emerges from this text is a henotheistic side of the Orphic belief, in which the figure of a one, ‘cosmic’ and creator god is represented through features that characterise him in relation with the other gods and with the universe, in both a syncretistic and hierarchic way, both in synchronic and diachronic terms. Such a conception expresses a sort of completeness and roundedness that can be considered as both temporal and spatial, in what I have more specifically defined as ‘circular’ theopantism.

Following on from this, the study moved on to the analysis of three other Orphic reflective sources which present henotheistic features, together with their literary contexts

¹²⁰³ §3.1.

and philosophical influences. In fragment 416 (298 K.) included in the lost Orphic Μικρότερος Κρατήρ (Shorter Krater) I firstly highlighted the representation of Zeus as ἀρχή. Zeus as origin, first and creator holding the supremacy and origins of the entire universe in a vertical perspective is an aspect shared with the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* as well and it constituted the starting point of my comparative analysis of Orphic henotheistic sources, thanks to which I have showed the most important elements and attributes of the divinity shared by the Orphic sources taken into consideration.¹²⁰⁴ Zeus is represented in this fragment also as vivifying giver of life and creator, and the analysis has focused on the relationship between these features, the Stoic doctrine on the divinity as it emerges from selected fragments attributed to Chrysippus, and (Neo)Platonic texts such as Plato's *Cratylus* and Proclus' *On Plato's Cratylus*. The study of mutual influences has proved that the Derveni commentator and the Stoics are evidence of the fact that etymologizing and allegoresis were an established practice, and that these philosophical sources could be seen in the wider picture of the etymologizing exercise of the name of Zeus linked with a henotheistic view of the divinity. I argued that this could be the result of a reflection on Orphic sources linked with an Orphic henotheistic view of the divine, and that Plato was specifically interested -in the passages I quoted- in the unity and absolute power of Zeus as in these 'henotheistic' terms the divinity is described as strong and imposing its cosmic order, absorbing (also without explicitly quoting the sources) some Orphic elements which he was interested in and knew well. The Orphic conception of the cosmic henotheistic (theopantistic) god later became interesting to the Neoplatonists as Zeus is for Proclus both immanent (encosmic) and transcendent (part of the intellectual triad), focusing the attention on philosophical etymology and theology.

Fragment 543 F (239 K.), belonging to a group of selected Orphic fragments differently attributed to a lost Dionysian Orphic Poem, presented a syncretistic conception of the divine

¹²⁰⁴ §3.2.

in which the one god is described as ‘One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus’. As demonstrated in the first chapter of the thesis, the formula εἷς + name of the god can be mostly traced to an intuitive context and has a strong relation with eulogies and acclamations which constitute its origin and background. However, this fragment has been passed down to us by philosophical tradition (possibly Neoplatonism through Cornelius Labeo) and thus presents features related to more reflective contexts such as statements close to a pantheistic view of the divinity (Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι).¹²⁰⁵

I argued that fragment 620 F (299 K.), taken from a lost Orphic work known as Ὅρκιοι, was composed by a Greek author close to an Orphic milieu and syncretistic henotheistic influences, then utilised by consecutive writers in order to convey Jewish or (later) Christian messages. I also outlined the main henotheistic features (Zeus as a paternal figure, the role played by the *cosmos*) that this fragment has in common with other Orphic fragments which are generally attributed to the lost Orphic *Oaths*, as well as the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*.¹²⁰⁶

The last fragment taken into consideration was fr. 691 F (248 K.) often classified as belonging to a corpus of texts known as ‘Διαθηκαί’ (Orphic Testaments) and which I considered to be the product of a syncretistic conception of the divinity, in which in a pagan background are inserted Jewish influences and traits.¹²⁰⁷ Furthermore, I argued that the text presents henotheistic features, since the god that is represented appears to be described as one supreme god, ruling over the universe and other gods. This divine supremacy, which is analogous to the theopantistic Zeus of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus*, is indeed presented through the image of the dominion over both air and the underworld, land and sea. Other elements are shared with various texts previously analysed, thus reinforcing my argument of a ‘common’ set of Orphic henotheistic attributes of a theopantistic divinity traceable to Orphic

¹²⁰⁵ §3.3.

¹²⁰⁶ §3.4.

¹²⁰⁷ §3.5.

sources and which influenced philosophical reflection on the divine. The association with the Underworld, for example, is present in fragment 543 F (239 K.) as well, and the notion of Zeus being both male and female is found also in the *De mundo* version of the Orphic *Hymn to Zeus* as well as in Stoic sources and Proclus.

The analysis of the *Orphic Hymns* in chapter 4 has focused on their interpretation as a valuable testimony of both the intuitive and more reflective side of the henotheistic manifestation. The study has highlighted how the texts examined express attitudes of the Orphic worshippers in a sort of verbal approach to the single (more important) divinity during a rite but also present features of later re-elaboration and reflection filtered through the hymnic literary genre. I therefore analysed different deities to determine which ones present similarities and differences with the gods of the traditional pantheon and which ones emerge from the plurality of this pantheon with specific and peculiar features of unity or uniqueness.

In *Hymn 15* Zeus is described mainly as creator of the world, beginning and end of all things and supreme ruler of natural things.¹²⁰⁸ I was able to trace a parallel between two ‘reflective’ sources previously analysed –fr. 416 and Chrysippus’ fragments with the first verses of *Orphic Hymn 15*– since they seem to share a similar henotheistic view on the god Zeus as main creative figure. Indeed, I associated the third verse of the hymn with the Stoic doctrine and proposed a comparison between this verse and fragment 416 (298 K.), as well as a passage of the treatise *De mundo*. I also drew a parallel with Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus*, hypothesizing a Stoic influence but also the remains of an Orphic traditional heritage, taken from a literary corpus still circulating in the first centuries CE though probably mixed with other religious streams. I argued that although probably belonging originally to an intuitive context of prayer, the hymn reports concepts and terminologies possibly derived from Stoic

¹²⁰⁸ §4.2.

influence, as well as others gleaned from ‘genuinely’ Orphic formulations and representations of the divinity, thus inviting me to postulate a possible stream of tradition in which Stoic formulations merge with Orphic literary traditions.

What I traced in this Orphic Hymn –and the following hymns– was a continuation or development of the complex twine of philosophical and religious concepts and expressions which I began analysing in chapter 3. I was indeed inclined to see in these hymns a genuine though late expression of what can be defined as Orphic tradition, if by ‘Orphic’ we mean a religious tendency not always independent from other mystery (or non-mystery) expressions but which shows itself to belong to a traditional cultural and religious heritage. This heritage reflects many influences and cross-contaminations and what the *Orphic Hymns* seemed to show was a manifestation of a religious and literary tendency active during the first centuries CE, both in an intuitive and a more reflective way.

A new semantic area of the attributes of Zeus also emerged from this hymn, that of lightning and thunderbolt; such a description is also found in the different versions of the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus* and in the *Stoic Hymn to Zeus* as well. However, I observed that in this case, given the parallelism and influence of Stoic tradition, the features of Zeus as master of the thunderbolt and lightning may be genuinely belonging to the Orphic literary and possibly religious (cult) tradition. Indeed, in addition to the reference to the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus*, I also analysed an internal reference to two other *Orphic Hymns* which are placed later in the collection, that is *Hymn 19*, where it is stated that Zeus is lord of thunder and lightning, and *Hymn 20* where ‘ἀστραπαῖε/ ἀστραπαῖον’ appears once again. The final reference to the great god Zeus, here at the centre of the worshippers’ attention, as increaser and sower recalls the representation of Zeus in henotheistic Orphic sources such as fr. 416 (298 K) and I proposed that the depiction of Zeus as health and fertility god might therefore be not completely unknown to the Orphic literary and religious tradition still partially alive in the first centuries CE.

The analysis of *Hymn 19* highlighted how Zeus is referred to in the text first of all as father (a recurrent feature in the Orphic henotheistic sources I have examined) thus establishing right from the beginning his role as dominant god and father to all creatures.¹²⁰⁹ The dominant figure of Zeus, analysed by me in henotheistic terms, is here described as associated with natural phenomena such as the thunderbolt and lightning but is nonetheless also depicted with the traditional feature of father (Ζεῦ πάτερ) of all beings thus establishing his sovereignty over the *cosmos*. I argued that it is possible to trace a certain Orphic tradition, possibly shown in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, that attributes the domain of the thunderbolt and storm to a one, more powerful god –here Zeus. I have also pointed out that the relation between Zeus as a cosmic god and the thunder appears to be ascribable in these hymns to both the intuitive side of the Orphic belief and the reflective one. The references to previous Orphic, Stoic and Heraclitean tradition (not to mention the close relationship with the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise) invited me to stress the degree of awareness and reflectiveness involved in these poems. This high degree of reflection and re-elaboration has prompted me to interpret this hymn more as an intellectual work of art than a straightforward evidence of worship.

The third and last hymn of the collection I have analysed was *Hymn 20* where the divinity is described as god of thunderbolt and lightning as it was in the previous hymn.¹²¹⁰ The general idea of the poem is again that of terror generated by lightning and of the powerful role of Zeus Astrapaïos as ruler of the *cosmos*. The religious rituals and (partly) conceptions that can be found in this text (and in the wider collection) have been analysed throwing light on their connection with the wider philosophical and religious background, and I considered such texts as evidence of the influence of different philosophical positions on a literary and cultural tradition (a ‘reflective’ Orphic corpus) partly connected to an actual rite.

¹²⁰⁹ §4.3.

¹²¹⁰ §4.4.

Furthermore, the study of the word μέγαν in this text as evidence of attention to one specific, greater deity which attracts the worshipper's (and reader's) attention as the main divinity has invited me to reflect on the term 'megatheism' in henotheistic and mystery contexts.

Overall, the similarities between this hymn and other hymns of the collection highlight internal allusions and hints intentionally or unintentionally inserted by the author(s) of the *Hymns*. It is true that I stressed the intuitive features of our selected poems and their possible relationship with an actual cult and ritual practices. However, these internal references also prompted me to think in terms of literary allusions inside the text. Indeed, the main divinity that seems here to be addressed is Zeus as not only a celestial god but also a god of fertility. The generative powers of Zeus appear as a feature also of Orphic henotheistic fragments previously analysed such as fragment 416 (298 K.) from the lost Μικρότερος Κρατήρ and 620 F (299 K.) from the *Oaths*, where Zeus is creator and father of all mortals and non-mortals, begetter of all.

In order to shed light on the complexities that lie behind the emerging of one main divinity in different contexts, I also took into consideration *Hymn* 52 addressed to Dionysus as god of Triennial Feasts. I noticed how the Derveni's commentary on the Orphic Theogonies and the passage on the figure of Dionysus/Protogonos as both father and son of the gods from *Hymn* 52 might be related, highlighting a possible relationship with the wider conception of one main divine figure connected with fatherhood and features of ruling and creative powers. Such a reflection on the relationship between the main divinity and the *cosmos* appeared to be in line with my analysis of the divine figure of the *macranthropos* and the Orphic cosmic god who is described as ruler and creator of all without fully identifying with reality.

In the examination of the Hellenistic Orphic *Hieros Logos* in chapter 5 I have tried to show how the anonymous author of the poem attempted to merge two focal points, that of the Jewish background and that of the Greek/Orphic tradition. After having provided an

overview of the main features of the text I have made use of the literary analysis as a starting point to show why these Alexandrian authors decided to imitate an Orphic poem in order to address their audience. The reasons that lie behind this choice, together with the ‘genuinely’ Orphic elements of the poem, have been the object of my analysis leading to the focus on the religious contents of the text, trying to cast light on its historical and religious relevance for the understanding of the development of an Orphic henotheistic tendency. In fact, I argued that the anonymous author deliberately chose to imitate an Orphic *Hieros Logos* and quote passages from specific Orphic (and Peripatetic, in the case of Aristobulus’ version) texts just because of the religious nature of these texts. After having analysed many Orphic sources both related to ‘intuitive’ and ‘reflective’ contexts, I believed it to be possible to trace a certain henotheistic trend in some of the Orphic literary corpus, which was potentially known to the Alexandrian intellectual circle. Some exponents of the Jewish Hellenistic circle may have chosen to glean images from part of this religious corpus in order to better convey their message or simply show how monotheistic and pagan conceptions could go hand in hand in a lively cultural environment such as that of Hellenistic Alexandria. I have observed how the notion of a one and unique God emerges from the text of this peculiar *Hieros Logos* as characterised by the co-existence of two conceptions of the divinity, that is a personalistic one (of monotheistic nature) and a markedly Orphic henotheistic one.

We have encountered many passages, references and images of biblical heritage such as the representation of the divinity as seated on a golden throne or the image of the cloud to portray the inscrutability of the divine. These elements allowed me to draw attention to the monotheistic and Jewish *facies* of the text, due to the background and aims of the anonymous Hellenistic Jewish author. Furthermore, I have also taken into account Hellenic literary and cultural elements: first of all the passages characterised by an Orphic aura such as the initial formula of the ban from divulging the secrets to the non-initiates or the reference to the *παλαιὸς λόγος*, inserted in order to bestow more literary prestige and poetic ornament on

the poem. Secondly, the expressions taken from Greek epic (Homer, Hesiod) and philosophy such as Stoic and Peripatetic sources: the image of the brazen sky and the golden throne, the relation between God and the *cosmos* or the description of the divine creative activity. The transcendent and monotheistic features of the divinity, however, are constantly reaffirmed, in spite of the many Hellenic attributes that seem to confer immanentistic hints to the text. In fact, even though these attributes make transcendence in the poem less ‘perfect’ and enrich the verses from a literary and poetic point of view, the God of the *Hieros Logos* is the one God of the Old Testament. He is, indeed, one and unique since his unity, ‘simplicity’ and uniformity qualify him as the only divine being.

To conclude, what this thesis has fundamentally demonstrated is the existence of a ‘common’ set of Orphic henotheistic attributes of a theopantistic divinity traceable to different Orphic sources linked with a wider philosophical reflection on the divine. I believe it is possible to find in Orphic fragments and Hymns an expression of an ‘Orphic’ tradition, if by ‘Orphic’ we mean a religious and cultural tendency not always independent from other mystery (or non-mystery) expressions but which shows itself to belong to a traditional cultural and religious heritage, characterised by a complex twine of philosophical and religious concepts and influences. I have showed a henotheistic side of Orphic belief emerging from Orphic reflective sources, in which the figure of a one, ‘cosmic’ and creator god is represented through features that characterise him in relation with the other gods and with the universe, in both a syncretistic and hierarchic way, both in synchronic and diachronic terms. Such a conception expresses a sort of completeness and roundedness that can be considered as both temporal and spatial, in what I have more specifically defined as ‘circular’ theopantism. In the examination of the development of these henotheistic features, I have tried to illustrate how the anonymous author of the Hellenistic *Hieros Logos* attempted to merge the two focal points, that of the Jewish background and that of the Greek/Orphic tradition, trying to cast light on its historical and religious relevance for the

understanding of the development of an Orphic henotheistic tendency. Lastly, I have shown how late Christian authors decided to carry out a selection mainly focusing on Orphic texts that I described as henotheistic, in order both to incorporate the prestigious ancient Greek wisdom into their own tradition and at the same time show the superiority of the new faith.

My analysis has therefore aimed to partially transform and reframe our understanding of Orphism as well as the relationship between Orphic texts and other philosophical sources in the period I have been dealing with. Making reference to my introductory comments on Orphic mysteriosophy,¹²¹¹ I have demonstrated that the strain of thought that I call Orphism has –to a certain extent– a specific religious, cultural and theological identity but cannot be separated from the broader philosophical tradition of the different time periods. Indeed, this pattern of thought has both contributed to and drawn from other traditions such as Stoicism, Alexandrian Judaism and Neoplatonism.

Challenging an old-fashioned view according to which monotheism would be the evolution of polytheism and –most of all– that polytheism would be fixed, this thesis has showed the complexity and variety of Greek polytheistic expression. Far from being a stage towards monotheism, Greek polytheism embraced expressions of divine unity and to some extent uniqueness at both a more intuitive and reflective level in what I have called henotheistic utterances. Indeed, this thesis allowed for interactions between the two spheres in Orphic texts such as the *Orphic Hymn to Zeus* and the *Orphic Hymns*, rejecting the common view according to which monotheistic expressions should be considered mainly intellectual and polytheistic ones more intuitive. Philosophical reflections on divine unity, which are considerably developed in Hellenistic and Late Antique times, left their trace in Orphic religious speculation and vice versa. At the same time, I considered this as evidence of the

¹²¹¹ See the Introduction, section 3.

influence of different philosophical and religious positions on a literary and cultural Orphic tradition partly connected to (and influenced by) shared ritual and worship practices.

The careful analysis of the philosophical, literary and religious elements of the Orphic texts I have included in this dissertation should therefore invite the reader to think differently about both those sources and the wider Orphic phenomenon. The role played by henotheistic expressions in Orphic mystery texts through time, both in reflective and intuitive contexts, both in terms of references internal to the Orphic corpus and of wider philosophical cross-contamination, has been indeed highlighted and proved throughout the dissertation. This has been done making use of a historical comparative analysis supported by the conceptual tools borrowed from Cognitive Studies of Religion, and one can hope that this will prompt further discussion on the issue.

Appendix

Chapter 1

Item 1 – Plato, *Timaeus* 41a-b

Transl. Zeyl 2000: 28

ἐπεὶ δ' οὖν πάντες ὅσοι τε περιπολοῦσιν φανερώς καὶ ὅσοι φαίνονται καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐθέλωσιν θεοὶ γένεσιν ἔσχον, λέγει πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁ τότε τὸ πᾶν γεννήσας τάδε – “Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατὴρ τε ἔργων, δι' ἐμοῦ γενόμενα ἅλυστα ἐμοῦ γε μὴ ἐθέλοντος. τὸ μὲν οὖν δὴ δεθὲν πᾶν λυτόν, τό γε μὴν καλῶς ἀρμοσθὲν καὶ ἔχον εὖ λύειν ἐθέλειν κακοῦ· δι' ἃ καὶ ἐπεὶ περ γεγέννησθε, ἀθάνατοι μὲν οὐκ ἐστὲ οὐδ' ἄλυστοι τὸ πάμπαν, οὔτι μὲν δὴ λυθήσεσθέ γε οὐδὲ τεύξεσθε θανάτου μοίρας, τῆς ἐμῆς βουλήσεως μείζονος ἔτι δεσμοῦ καὶ κυριωτέρου λαχόντες ἐκείνων οἷς ὅτ' ἐγίγνεσθε συνεδείσθε”.

In any case, when all the gods had come to be, both the ones who make their rounds conspicuously and the ones who present themselves only to the extent that they are willing, the begetter of this universe spoke to them. This is what he said: “O gods, works divine whose maker and father I am, whatever has come to be by my hands cannot be undone but by my consent. Now while it is true that anything that is bound is liable to being undone, still, only one who is evil would consent to the undoing of what has been well fitted together and is in fine condition. This is the reason why you, as creatures that have come to be, are neither completely immortal nor exempt from being undone. Still, you will not be undone nor will death be your portion, since you have received the guarantee of my will- a greater, more sovereign bond than those with which you were bound when you came to be”.

Item 2 – Plato, *Timaeus* 53b

Transl. Zeyl 2000: 43

καὶ τὸ μὲν δὴ πρὸ τούτου πάντα ταῦτ' εἶχεν ἀλόγως καὶ ἀμέτρως· ὅτε δ' ἐπεχειρεῖτο κοσμεῖσθαι τὸ πᾶν, πῦρ πρῶτον καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γῆν καὶ ἀέρα, ἵχνη μὲν ἔχοντα αὐτῶν ἄττα, παντάπασί γε μὴν διακείμενα ὥσπερ εἰκὸς ἔχειν ἅπαν ὅταν ἀπῇ τιнос θεός, οὕτω δὴ τότε πεφυκότα ταῦτα πρῶτον διεσχηματίσατο εἶδεσί τε καὶ ἀριθμοῖς. τὸ δὲ ἦ δυνατόν ὡς κάλλιστα ἄριστά τε ἐξ οὐχ οὕτως ἐχόντων τὸν θεὸν αὐτὰ συνιστάναι, παρὰ πάντα ἡμῖν ὡς ἀεὶ τοῦτο λεγόμενον ὑπαρχέτω.

Indeed, it is a fact that before this took place the four kinds all lacked proportion and measure, and at the time the ordering of the universe was undertaken, fire, water, earth and air initially possessed certain traces of what they are now. They were indeed in the condition one would expect thoroughly god-forsaken things to be in. So, finding them in this natural condition, the first thing the god then did was to give them their distinctive shapes, using forms and numbers. Here is a proposition we shall always affirm above all else: *The god fashioned these four kinds to be as perfect and excellent as possible, when they were not so before.*

Item 3 – Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* 2.34

Transl. Clark 2000: 69

θύσομεν τοίνυν καὶ ἡμεῖς· ἀλλὰ θύσομεν, ὡς προσήκει, διαφόρους τὰς θυσίας ὡς ἂν διαφόροις δυνάμεσι προσάγοντες· θεῷ μὲν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, ὡς τις ἀνὴρ σοφὸς ἔφη, μηδὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν μήτε θυμιῶντες μήτ' ἐπονομάζοντες· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἔνυλον, ὃ μὴ τῷ ἀύλῳ εὐθύς ἐστιν ἀκάθαρτον. διὸ οὐδὲ λόγος τούτῳ ὁ κατὰ φωνὴν οἰκεῖος, οὐδ' ὁ ἔνδον, ὅταν πάθει ψυχῆς ἢ μεμολυσμένος· διὰ δὲ σιγῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ καθαρῶν ἐννοιῶν θρησκεύομεν αὐτόν. δεῖ ἄρα συναφθέντας καὶ ὁμοιωθέντας αὐτῷ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀναγωγὴν θυσίαν ἱερὰν προσάγειν τῷ θεῷ, τὴν αὐτὴν δὲ καὶ ὕμνον οὔσαν καὶ ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν. ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ ἄρα τῆς ψυχῆς, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ θεωρίᾳ ἡ θυσία αὕτη τελεῖται. τοῖς δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐκγόνοις, νοητοῖς δὲ θεοῖς ἤδη καὶ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ λόγου ὕμνωδίαν προσθετέον.

So we too shall sacrifice. But we shall make, as is fitting, different sacrifices to different powers. To the god who rules over all, as a wise man said, we shall offer nothing perceived by the senses, either by burning or in words. For there is nothing material which is not at once impure to the immaterial. So not even *logos* expressed in speech is appropriate for him,

nor yet internal *logos* when it has been contaminated by the passion of the soul. But we shall worship him in pure silence and with pure thoughts about him. We must, then, be joined with and made like him, and must offer our own uplifting as a holy sacrifice to the god, for it is both our hymn and our security. This sacrifice is fulfilled in dispassion of the soul and contemplation of the god. For his offspring, the intelligible gods, hymn-singing in words should be added.

Item 4 – Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 8.8

Transl. Trapp 1997: 75-76

Θεὸς μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς κατὰ χώραν ἰδρυμένος οἰκονομεῖ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ τάξιν· εἰσὶ δ' αὐτῷ φύσεις ἀθάνατοι δεύτεραι, οἱ καλούμενοι δαίμονες, ἐν μεθορίᾳ γῆς καὶ οὐρανοῦ τεταγμένοι· θεοῦ μὲν ἀσθενέστεροι, ἀνθρώπου δ' ἰσχυρότεροι· θεῶν μὲν ὑπηρεταί, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιστάται· θεῶν μὲν πλησιαίτατοι, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιμελέστατοι. ἥ γὰρ ἂν τῷ διὰ μέσου πολλῷ τὸ θνητὸν πρὸς τὸ ἀθάνατον διετειχίσθη τῆς οὐρανόθεν ἐπόψεώς τε καὶ ὁμιλίας, ὅτι μὴ τῆς δαιμονίου ταύτης φύσεως, οἷον ἁρμονίας, κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἑκάτερον συγγένειαν καταλαβούσης δεσμῷ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κάλλος.

God himself, settled and immobile, administers the heavens and maintains their ordered hierarchy. But he has a race of secondary immortal beings, the so-called *daimones*, which have their station in the space between earth and heaven. These *daimones* are inferior in power to God, but superior to men; they are the gods' servants and men's overseers, more closely related than men to the gods, but more closely concerned than the gods with men. The mortal realm would indeed be separated from the immortal and from any sight or dealings with the heavens by a great intervening gulf, were it not for the harmonizing effect of these *daimones*, who bind and connect human beings to divine beauty in virtue of their kinship with both.

Item 5 – Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.12

Transl. Trapp 1997: 105-106

Εἰ δὲ ἐξασθενεῖς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ δημιουργοῦ θέαν, ἀρκεῖ σοι τὰ ἔργα ἐν τῷ παρόντι ὁρᾶν καὶ προσκυνεῖν τὰ ἔγγονα, πολλὰ καὶ παντοδαπὰ ὄντα, οὐχ ὅσα Βοιωτίος ποιητῆς λέγει· οὐ γὰρ τρισμῦριοι μόνον θεοί, θεοῦ παῖδες καὶ φίλοι, ἀλλ' ἄληπτοι ἀριθμῷ· τοῦτο μὲν κατ' οὐρανὸν αἱ ἀστέρων φύσεις· τοῦτο δ' αὖ κατ' αἰθέρα αἱ δαιμόνων οὐσίαι. βούλομαι δέ σοι

δειξαι τὸ λεγόμενον σαφεστέρα εἰκόνι. ἐννόει <μοι> μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καὶ βασιλείαν ἐρρωμένην, πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βασιλέως τοῦ ἀρίστου καὶ πρεσβυτάτου συμπάντων νενευκότες ἐκόντων. [...] βασιλέα δὲ αὐτὸν δὴ τὸν μέγαν ἀτρεμοῦντα ὥσπερ νόμον, παρέχοντα τοῖς πειθομένοις σωτηρίαν ὑπάρχουσιν ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ κοινωνοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς πολλοὺς μὲν ὁρατοὺς θεοὺς, πολλοὺς δὲ ἀφανεῖς, τοὺς μὲν περὶ τὰ πρόθυρα αὐτὰ εἰλουμένους, οἷον εἰσαγγελέας τινὰς καὶ βασιλεῖ συγγενεστάτους, ὁμοτραπέζους αὐτοῦ καὶ συνεστίους, τοὺς δὲ τούτων ὑπηρέτας, τοὺς δὲ ἔτι τούτων καταδεεστέρους. διαδοχὴν ὁρᾷς καὶ τάξιν ἀρχῆς καταβαίνουσιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ μέχρι γῆς.

But if you are not strong enough to see the Father and Creator, then it must suffice for the moment to contemplate his works and to worship his offspring, who are many and varied, far more numerous than the Boeotian poet says. God's divine children and relatives are not a mere thirty thousand in number, but countless: the stars and planets in the heavens, and the *daimones* in the ether too. In order to explain to you what I am saying, I should like to invoke a still more lucid image. Think of a great empire and a mighty kingdom, in which all bow willingly to one soul, that of the best and most revered of kings. [...] The Great King himself sits motionless, like the law, bestowing on his subjects the security that resides in him. As his partners in power, he has a whole host of visible and invisible deities, some gathered close round the vestibule of his throne-room, like a king's viziers and close relatives, sharing his table and his hearth, others subordinate to these, and yet others further subordinate to them. Here is a succession, a hierarchy for you to behold, from God above to the earth below.

Chapter 2

Item 6 - *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 15.2

My translation

καὶ ἐν τοῖς Ὅρκοις δὲ οὕτως·

Οὐρανὸν ὀρκίζω σε, θεοῦ μεγάλου σοφὸν ἔργον,

Αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός, τὴν φθέγγατο πρῶτον,

Ἦνίκα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἑαῖς στηρίξατο βουλαῖς.

Τί βούλεται τὸ λέγειν αὐτὸν 'Αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός, τὴν φθέγγατο πρῶτον'; 'Αὐδὴν' ἐνταῦθα τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ὀνομάζει λόγον, δι' οὗ οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἐγένετο κτίσις, ὡς

διδάσκουσιν ἡμᾶς αἱ θεῖαι τῶν ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν προφητεῖαι· αἷς ἐν μέρει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ προσσχὼν ἔγνω ὅτι τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶσα ἐγένετο ἡ κτίσις. Διὸ καὶ μετὰ τὸ φῆσαι ‘Αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατρός, τὴν φθέγγετο πρῶτον’, παραυτὰ συνάπτει λέγων “Ἡνίκα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἑαῖς στηρίζετο βουλαῖς”. Ἐνταῦθα τὸν λόγον ‘αὐδὴν’ διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν ὀνομάζει μέτρον.

And in the *Oaths* (Orpheus) says:

I adjure you by heaven, wise endeavour of a great god,
I swear by the voice of the father, who made it resound at first,
when he fixed all the cosmos according to his will.

What does he mean by ‘I swear by the voice of the father, who made it resound at first’? Here he calls ‘voice’ the Word of God, and through Him the sky, earth and everything was created, as the divine prophecies of the holy men teach us. Thanks to those prophecies, which he came to know one by one in Egypt, he learnt that everything was created by the Word of the Lord. And so after saying ‘I swear by the voice of the father, who made it resound at first’, he immediately adds: ‘when he fixed all the cosmos according to his will’. And he calls ‘voice’ the Word (of the Father) because of the poetical metre.

Item 7 – *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 36.4

My translation

εἰ δὲ τις ὄκνος ἢ παλαιὰ τῶν προγόνων ὑμῶν δεισιδαιμονία τέως ἐντυγχάνειν ὑμᾶς ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν προφητείαις κωλύει, δι’ ὧν δυνατὸν μανθάνειν ὑμᾶς ἓνα καὶ μόνον εἰδέναι θεόν, ὃ πρῶτόν ἐστι τῆς ἀληθοῦς θεοσεβείας γνώρισμα, τῷ γοῦν πρότερον ὑμᾶς τὴν πολυθεότητα διδάξαντι, ὕστερον δὲ λυσιτελῇ καὶ ἀναγκαίαν παλινωδίαν ᾗσαι προελομένῳ πείσθητε, Ὅρφεϊ, ταῦτ’ εἰρηκότι, ἃ μικρῷ πρόσθεν γέγραφα, καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς δὲ τοῖς τὰ αὐτὰ περὶ ἑνὸς θεοῦ γεγραφόσι πείσθητε.

If some concern or religious reverence towards your ancestors prevents you from getting closer to the prophecies of the holy men, thanks to whose prophecies it is possible to learn that there is only one God, something which is the first sign of true religiosity, then listen to the one who first taught you about polytheism, but then preferred to sing a fruitful and necessary palinode, Orpheus, who said those things which I wrote about not long ago, and also listen to the others who have written the same things on the one God.

Item 8 – Clement, *Protrepticus* 1.4

Transl. Butterworth 1979: 9

ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν δοκοῦσιν ὁ Θράκιος ἐκεῖνος Ὀρφεὺς καὶ ὁ Θηβαῖος καὶ ὁ Μηθυμναῖος, ἄνδρες τινὲς οὐκ ἄνδρες, ἀπατηλοὶ γεγονέναι, προσχήματι μουσικῆς λυμηνάμενοι τὸν βίον, ἐντέχνῳ τινὶ γοητείᾳ δαιμονῶντες εἰς διαφθοράς, ὕβρεις ὀργιάζοντες, πένθη ἐκθειάζοντες, τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα χειραγωγῆσαι πρῶτοι, ναὶ μὴν λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις, τουτέστιν ἀγάλμασι καὶ σκιαγραφίαις, ἀνοικοδομῆσαι τὴν σκασιότητα τοῦ ἔθνους, τὴν καλὴν ὄντως ἐκείνην ἐλευθερίαν τῶν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν πεπολιτευμένων ᾠδαῖς καὶ ἐπωδαῖς ἐσχάτῃ δουλείᾳ καταζεύξαντες. Ἄλλ' οὐ τοιόσδε ὁ ᾠδὸς ὁ ἐμὸς οὐδ' εἰς μακρὰν καταλύσων ἀφίκται τὴν δουλείαν τὴν πικρὰν τῶν τυραννούντων δαιμόνων, ὡς δὲ τὸν πρᾶον καὶ φιλάνθρωπον τῆς θεοσεβείας μετὰ γων ἡμᾶς ζυγὸν αὐθις εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνακαλεῖται τοὺς εἰς γῆν ἐρριμμένους.

In my opinion, therefore, our Thracian, Orpheus, and the Theban and the Methymnian too, are not worthy of the name of man, since they were deceivers. Under cover of music they have outraged human life, being influenced by daemons, through some artful sorcery, to compass man's ruin. By commemorating deeds of violence in their religious rites, and by bringing stories of sorrow into worship, they were the first to lead men by the hand to idolatry; yes, and with sticks and stones, that is to say, statues and pictures, to build up the stupidity of custom. By their chants and enchantments they have held captive in the lowest slavery that truly noble freedom which belongs to those who are citizens under heaven. But far different is my minstrel, for He has come to bring to a speedy end the bitter slavery of the daemons that lord it over us; and by leading us back to the mild and kindly yoke of piety He calls once again to heaven those who have been cast down to earth.

Item 9 – Clement, *Protrepticus* 7.74

Transl. Butterworth 1979: 167

ὁ δὲ Θράκιος ἱεροφάντης καὶ ποιητὴς ἅμα, ὁ τοῦ Οἰάγρου Ὀρφεύς, μετὰ τὴν τῶν ὀργίων ἱεροφαντίαν καὶ τῶν εἰδώλων τὴν θεολογίαν, παλινωδίαν ἀληθείας εἰσάγει, τὸν ἱερὸν ὄντως ὁψέ ποτε, ὅμως δ' οὖν ἄδων λόγον· [...]. Εἵτα ὑποβὰς διαρρήδην ἐπιφέρει·

εἷς ἔστ', αὐτογενής, ἐνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται·
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περινίσσεται, οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
εἰσορᾷ θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δέ γε πάντας ὀράται.

Οὕτως μὲν δὴ Ὀρφεὺς χρόνῳ τέ ποτε συνῆκεν πεπλανημένος.

Ἄλλὰ σὺ μὴ μέλλων, βροτὲ ποικιλόμενι, βράδυνε,
ἀλλὰ παλίμπλαγκτος στρέψας θεὸν ἰλάσκοιο.

Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα ἐναύσματά τινα τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θείου λαβόντες Ἕλληνες ὀλίγα ἄττα τῆς ἀληθείας ἐφθέγγαντο, προσμαρτυροῦσι μὲν τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς οὐκ ἀποκεκρυμμένην, σφᾶς δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐλέγχουσιν ἀσθενεῖς, οὐκ ἐφικόμενοι τοῦ τέλους.

And the Thracian interpreter of the mysteries, who was a poet too, Orpheus the son of Oeagrus, after his exposition of the orgies and account of the idols, brings in a recantation consisting of truth. Now at the very last he sings of the really sacred Word: [...]. Then, lower down, he adds explicitly:

One, self-begotten, lives; all things proceed
from One; and in His works He ever moves:
no mortal sees Him, yet Himself sees all.

Thus wrote Orpheus; in the end, at least, he understood that he had gone astray:

inconstant mortal, make no more delay,
but turn again, and supplicate thy God.

It may be freely granted that the Greeks received some glimmerings of the divine word, and gave utterance to a few scraps of truth. Thus they bear their witness to its power, which has not been hidden. On the other hand, they convict themselves of weakness, since they failed to reach the end.

Item 10 – Clement, *Stromateis* 1.14.59

Transl. Ferguson 1991: 66

φασὶ δὲ Ἕλληνες μετὰ γε Ὀρφέα καὶ Λίνον καὶ τοὺς παλαιοτάτους παρὰ σφίσι ποιητὰς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ πρῶτους θαυμασθῆναι τοὺς ἑπτὰ τοὺς ἐπικληθέντας σοφούς. [...] ὁρᾷς ὅπως κἂν τοῖς Ἑλλήνων προφήταις δίδωσί τι τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται πρὸς τε οἰκοδομὴν καὶ πρὸς ἐντροπὴν διαλεγόμενός τινων Ἑλληνικοῖς συγχρῆσθαι ποιήμασι;

The Greeks say that after Orpheus and Linus and their oldest poets, the first to acquire a high reputation for wisdom were the so-called Seven Sages. [...] Do you see how he [Paul] grants a measure of truth to the prophets of Greece as well and is not ashamed, in a discussion designed to build them up and direct them to self-examination, to use Greek poems?

Item 11 – Clement, *Stromateis* 1.15.66

Transl. Ferguson 1991: 72

οἶδε μὲν οἱ χρόνοι τῶν παρ' Ἑλλησι πρεσβυτάτων σοφῶν τε καὶ φιλοσόφων. ὥς δὲ οἱ πλεῖστοι αὐτῶν βάρβαροι τὸ γένος καὶ παρὰ βαρβάροις παιδευθέντες, τί δεῖ καὶ λέγειν, εἴ γε Τυρρηνὸς ἢ Τύριος ὁ Πυθαγόρας ἐδείκνυτο, Ἀντισθένης δὲ Φρυγὴς ἦν καὶ Ὀρφεὺς Ὀδρύσης ἢ Θρᾷξ; Ὅμηρον γὰρ οἱ πλεῖστοι Αἰγύπτιον φαίνουσιν.

This is the chronology of the older Greek sages and philosophers. I hardly need to say that the majority of them were non-Greek by birth and educated by non-Greeks, when Pythagoras has been shown Tyrrhenian or Tyrian; Antisthenes, Phrygian; and Orpheus, Odrysian or Thracian. The majority make Homer an Egyptian.

Item 12 – Clement, *Stromateis* 5.4.24

Transl. in Roberts – Donaldson – Coxe 1885: 449-450 revised and edited by me

ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ παρὰ τούτων τῶν προφητῶν τὴν θεολογίαν δεδιδασκόμενοι ποιηταὶ δι' ὑπονοίας πολλὰ φιλοσοφοῦσι, τὸν Ὀρφέα λέγω, τὸν Λίνον, τὸν Μουσαῖον, τὸν Ὅμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ τοὺς ταύτῃ σοφοὺς. παραπέτασμα δὲ αὐτοῖς πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἡ ποιητικὴ ψυχαγωγία· ὄνειροί τε καὶ σύμβολα ἀφανέστερα πάντα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐ φθόνῳ (οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἐμπαθεῖν νοεῖν τὸν θεόν), ἀλλ' ὅπως εἰς τὴν τῶν αἰνιγμάτων ἔννοιαν ἡ ζήτησις παρεισδύουσα ἐπὶ τὴν εὕρεσιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀναδράμῃ.

But those taught in theology by those prophets, the poets, philosophize much by way of a hidden sense. I mean Orpheus, Linus, Musæus, Homer, and Hesiod, and those in this fashion wise. The persuasive style of poetry is for them a veil for the many. Dreams and signs are all more or less obscure to men, not from jealousy (for it were wrong to conceive of God as subject to passions), but in order that research, introducing to the understanding of enigmas, may haste to the discovery of truth.

Item 13 – Clement, *Stromateis* 5.12.78

Transl. Holladay 1996: 117

καὶ ὅταν λέγῃ ἡ γραφὴ 'εἰσῆλθεν δὲ Μωυσῆς εἰς τὸν γνώφον οὗ ἦν ὁ θεός', τοῦτο δηλοῖ τοῖς συνιέναι δυναμένοις, ὥς ὁ θεὸς ἀόρατός ἐστι καὶ ἄρρητος, γνώφος δὲ ὥς ἀληθῶς ἡ τῶν

πολλῶν ἀπιστία τε καὶ ἄγνοια τῇ αὐγῇ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπίπροσθε φέρεται. Ὀρφεύς τε αὖ ὁ θεολόγος ἐντεῦθεν ὠφελημένος εἰπών·

εἷς ἔστ', αὐτοτελής, ἐνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται.

(ἢ 'πέφυκεν', γράφεται γὰρ καὶ οὕτως), ἐπιφέρει·

οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν

εἰσοράει θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δέ γε πάντας ὁρᾶται.

σαφέστερον δὲ ἐπιλέγει·

αὐτὸν δ' οὐχ ὁρώω· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται.

πᾶσι γὰρ θνητοῖς θνηταὶ κόραι εἰσὶν ἐν ὅσοις

μικραί, ἐπεὶ σάρκες τε καὶ ὀστέα ἐμπεφυῖα ἐμπεφύασιν.

And when the Scripture says 'Moses entered into the thick darkness where God was', this shows to those capable of understanding that God is invisible and inexpressible. And 'the darkness' -which is, in truth, the unbelief and ignorance of the multitude- obstructs the gleam of the truth. And again Orpheus, the theologian, aided from this quarter, says:

One is perfect in himself, and all things are made the progeny of one,

(or, 'are born'; for so also is it written). He adds:

Him

no one of mortals has seen, but He sees all.

And he adds more clearly:

Him see I not, for round about, a cloud has settled;

for in all mortal eyes are small, and mortal pupils —

only flesh and bones grow there.

Item 14 – Clement, *Stromateis* 5.14.126-127

Transl. Holladay 1996: 125-127

παραφράζει δὲ ἐκείνας τὰς προφητικὰς γραφάς, τὴν τε διὰ Ὡσηὲ "ἐγὼ στερεῶν βροντὴν καὶ κτίζων πνεῦμα, οὗ αἱ χεῖρες τὴν στρατιὰν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐθεμελίωσαν", καὶ τὴν διὰ Μωυσέως· "ἴδετε ἴδετε, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι θεὸς ἕτερος πλην ἐμοῦ· ἐγὼ ἀποκτενῶ καὶ ζῆν ποιήσω· πατάξω καὶ γὰρ ἰάσομαι· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἐξελεῖται ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν μου".

αὐτὸς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ κακὸν θνητοῖσι φυτεύει

καὶ πόλεμον κρύοντα καὶ ἄλγεα δακρυόντα.

κατὰ τὸν Ὀρφέα. [...]

πάλιν ἡμῖν ἁσάτω ὁ Θράκιος Ὀρφεύς·

χεῖρα δὲ δεξιτερὴν ἐπὶ τέρματος ὠκεανοῖο
πάντοθεν ἐκτέτακεν, γαίη δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ βέβηκεν.

And he paraphrases those prophetic Scriptures — that in Isaiah, “I am he that fixes the thunder, and creates the wind; whose hands have founded the host of heaven”; and that in Moses, “Behold, behold that I am He, and there is no god beside me: I will kill, and I will make to live; I will smite, and I will heal: and there is none that shall deliver out of my hands”.

and He, from good, to mortals planeth ill,
and cruel war, and tearful woes,
according to Orpheus. [...]

Again let the Thracian Orpheus sing to us:

His right hand all around to ocean's bound
He stretches; and beneath His feet is earth.

Item 15 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.5.13-6.1-4

Transl. Gifford 1903: 16-17 revised and edited by me

φέρ' οὖν πρῶτον ἀπάντων τὰς παλαιτάτας καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς πατρίους ἡμῶν αὐτῶν θεολογίας κατὰ πᾶσαν πόλιν εἰσέτι καὶ νῦν τεθρυλημένας ἐπιθεωρήσωμεν, τὰς τε σεμνὰς τῶν γενναίων φιλοσόφων περὶ τε κόσμου συστάσεως καὶ περὶ θεῶν διαλήψεις, ἵνα γνῶμεν εἴτε καὶ ὀρθῶς ἀπέστημεν αὐτῶν, εἴτε καὶ μή. [...] Φοίνικας τοιγαροῦν καὶ Αἰγυπτίους πρώτους ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων κατέχει λόγος ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ ἀστέρας θεοὺς ἀποφῆναι, μόνους τε εἶναι τῆς τῶν ὅλων γενέσεώς τε καὶ φθορᾶς αἰτίους, εἴτα δὲ τὰς παρὰ τοῖς πᾶσι βοωμένας θεοποιίας τε καὶ θεογονίας εἰσηγήσασθαι τῷ βίῳ. [...] Ἄλλ' οὐ τῇδε ἄρα καὶ τοῖς μετέπειτα ἀνθρώποις τὰ τῆς πολυθέου πλάνης περίστατο, ἐλαύνοντα δὲ εἰς βυθὸν κακῶν μείζονα τῆς ἀθεότητος τὴν δυσσέβειαν ἀπειργάζετο, Φοινίκων, εἴτα Αἰγυπτίων ἀπαρξαμένων τῆς πλάνης· παρ' ὧν φασι πρῶτον Ὀρφέα τὸν Οἰάγρου μεταστησάμενον τὰ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις Ἑλλησιν μεταδοῦναι μυστήρια, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ Κάδμον τὰ φοινικικὰ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀγαγεῖν μετὰ καὶ τῆς τῶν γραμμάτων μαθήσεως.

First of all then let us carefully survey the most ancient theologies, and especially those of our own forefathers, celebrated even till now in every city, and the solemn decisions of noble philosophers concerning the constitution of the world and concerning the gods, that we may learn whether we did right or not in departing from them. [...] It is reported then that Phoenicians and Egyptians were the first of all mankind to declare the sun and moon and

stars to be gods, and to be the sole causes of both the generation and decay of the universe, and that they afterwards introduced into common life the deifications and theogonies which are matters of general notoriety. [...] Not here, however, did polytheistic error stay its course for men of later generations, but driving on into an abyss of evils wrought even greater impiety than the denial of God, the Phoenicians and then the Egyptians being the first authors of the delusion. For from them, it is said, Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, first brought over with him the mysteries of the Egyptians, and imparted them to the Greeks; just, in fact, as Cadmus brought to them the Phoenician mysteries together with the knowledge of letters: for the Greeks up to that time did not yet know the use of the alphabet.

Item 16 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.8.19-9.1-3

Transl. Gifford 1903: 30-31 revised and edited by me

νῦν δέ μοι ἐπὶ τὸν Διόδωρον μετάβα, καὶ σκόπει οἷα περὶ τῆς πρώτης τῶν ἀνθρώπων θεολογίας ἱστορεῖ·

“Τοὺς δ’ οὖν κατ’ Αἴγυπτον ἀνθρώπους τὸ παλαιὸν γενομένους ἀναβλέψαντας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄλων φύσιν καταπλαγέντας τε καὶ θαυμάσαντας, ὑπολαβεῖν εἶναι δύο θεοὺς αἰδίοιους τε καὶ πρώτους, τόν τε ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην, ὧν τὸν μὲν Ὅσιριν, τὴν δὲ Ἴσιν ὀνομάσαι, [...]. Τῶν δὲ παρ’ Ἑλληνσι παλαιῶν μυθολόγων τινὲς τὸν Ὅσιριν Διόνυσον προσονομάζουσιν καὶ Σεῖριον παρωνύμως. Ὡν Εὐμόλπος μὲν ἐν τοῖς Βακχικοῖς ἔπεσί φησιν·

Ἄστροφαῖ Διόνυσον ἐν ἀκτίνεσσι πυρωπόν,
Ὀρφεὺς δὲ·

Τοῦνεκά μιν καλέουσι Φάνητά τε καὶ Διόνυσον.

Φασὶ δέ τινες καὶ τὸ ἑναμμα αὐτῷ τὸ τῆς νεβρίδος ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἄστρων ποικιλίας περιῆφθαι”.

But now pass on with me to Diodorus, and consider what he narrates concerning the primitive theology of mankind. “It is said then that the men who dwelled of old in Egypt when they looked up to the cosmos, and were struck with astonishment and admiration at the nature of the universe, supposed that the sun and moon were two eternal and primal gods, one of whom they named Osiris, and the other Isis [...].

But some of the ancient mythologists among the Greeks give to Osiris the additional name Dionysus, and, by a slight change in the name, Sirius. One of these, Eumolpus, speaks in his Bacchic poems thus:

Dionysus named,
bright as a star, his face aflame with rays.

And Orpheus says:

For that same cause Phanes and Dionysus
him they call.

Some say also that the fawn-skin cloak is hung about him as a representation of the spangling of the stars”.

Item 17 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 2.1.23-24

Transl. Gifford 1903: 52 revised and edited by me

τοὺς δὲ λέγοντας ἐν Θήβαις ταῖς Βοιωτικαῖς γεγονέναι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ Σεμέλης καὶ Διὸς σχεδιάζειν. Ὀρφέα γὰρ εἰς Αἴγυπτον παραβαλόντα καὶ μετασχόντα τῆς τελετῆς καὶ τῶν Διονυσιακῶν μυστηρίων μεταλαβεῖν, τοῖς τε Καδμείοις φίλον ὄντα καὶ τιμημένον ὑπ’ αὐτῶν μεταθεῖναι τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν γένεσιν ἐκείνοις χαρίζομενον, τοὺς δὲ ὄχλους τὰ μὲν διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν, τὰ δὲ διὰ τὸ βούλεσθαι τὸν θεὸν Ἑλλήνα ὀνομάζεσθαι, προσδέξασθαι προσηνῶς τὰς τελετὰς καὶ τὰ μυστήρια. Ἀφορμὰς δὲ ἔχειν τὸν Ὀρφέα πρὸς τὴν μετάθεσιν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσεως καὶ τελετῆς τοιαύτας.

But those who say that the god was born in Boeotian Thebes of Semele and Zeus talk, they say, at random. For when Orpheus had landed in Egypt and received initiation, he took part also in the Dionysiac mysteries, and, being friendly to the Cadmeans and honoured by them, he changed the place of the god's birth to please them; and the multitude, partly through ignorance and partly from their desire that the god should be called a Greek, gladly welcomed the initiations and mysteries.

Item 18 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 3.9.1-6

Transl. Gifford 1903: 109-110 revised and edited by me

“Ὅρα δὲ τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφίαν οὕτως διασκοπούμενος. τὸν γὰρ Δία τὸν νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου ὑπολαμβάνοντες, ὃς τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδημιούργησεν ἔχων τὸν κόσμον, ἐν μὲν ταῖς θεολογίαις αὕτη περὶ αὐτοῦ παραδεδώκασιν οἱ τὰ Ὀρφείως εἰπόντες [...] Ζεὺς οὖν ὁ πᾶς κόσμος, ζῶον ἐκ ζώων καὶ θεὸς ἐκ θεῶν· Ζεὺς δὲ, καθὼς νοῦς, ἀφ’ οὗ προφέρει πάντα καὶ δημιουργεῖ τοῖς νοήμασι [...]”.

Ταῦτά σοι ὁ Πορφύριος, ὢν τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον ἀποδομένων ἡρέμα καὶ ἐπὶ σχολῆς ἐπιθεωρῆσαι καλόν τίνα ποτὲ ἄρα τὸν Δία φασὶν εἶναι τὰ ἔπη. Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ οὐδ’ ἄλλον ἡγοῦμαι ἢ τὸν ὁρώμενον κόσμον ἐκ παντοίων συνεστῶτα μερῶν, τῶν τε κατ’ οὐρανὸν καὶ

αἰθέρα καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φαινομένων ἄστρον, ὥσπερ ἐν μεγάλου σώματος κεφαλῇ προτεταγμένων, τῶν τε ἐν ἀέρι καὶ γῇ καὶ θαλάττῃ καὶ τοῖς παραπλησίοις.

“Now look at the wisdom of the Greeks, and examine it as follows. The authors of the Orphic hymns supposed Zeus to be the mind of the world, and that he created all things therein, containing the world in himself. Therefore in their theological systems they have handed down their opinions concerning him thus: [...] Zeus, therefore, is the whole world, animal of animals, and god of gods; but Zeus, that is, inasmuch as he is the mind from which he brings forth all things, and by his thoughts creates them [...]”.

These things Porphyry tells you: and after they have been delivered in the manner already stated, it will be well to examine quietly and at leisure what after all the verses declare Zeus to be. I for my part think they make him to be none else than the visible world consisting of many various parts, both of those in heaven and in the ether, and of the stars which appear therein, -these being set first as in the head of a great body,- and also of the parts that lie in the air, and earth, and sea, and the like.

Item 19 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.1-4.

Transl. Gifford 1903: 462 revised and edited by me

Ἀρτάπανος δὲ φησιν ἐν τῇ *Περὶ Ἰουδαίων*, Ἀβραὰμ τελευτήσαντος καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Μεμψασθενώθ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, τὴν δυναστείαν παραλαβεῖν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Παλμανώθην. Τοῦτον δὲ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις φαύλως προσφέρεσθαι· καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὴν Κεσσὰν οἰκοδομῆσαι τό τε ἐπ’ αὐτῇ ἱερὸν καθιδρύσασθαι, εἴτα τὸν ἐν Ἡλιουπόλει ναὸν κατασκευάσαι. Τοῦτον δὲ γεννῆσαι θυγατέρα Μέρριν, ἣν Χενεφρῇ τινι κατεγγυῆσαι, [...] ταύτην δὲ στεῖραν ὑπάρχουσαν ὑποβαλέσθαι τινὸς τῶν Ἰουδαίων παιδίον, τοῦτο δὲ Μώϋσον ὀνομάσαι· ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων αὐτὸν ἀνδρωθέντα Μουσαῖον προσαγορευθῆναι. Γενέσθαι δὲ τὸν Μώϋσον τοῦτον Ὀρφέως διδάσκαλον· ἀνδρωθέντα δ’ αὐτὸν πολλὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὐχρηστα παραδοῦναι.

And Artapanus says, in his book *Concerning the Jews*, that after the death of Abraham, and of his son Mempasasthenoth, and likewise of the king of Egypt, his son Palmanoths succeeded to the sovereignty. This king behaved badly to the Jews; and first he built Kessa, and founded the temple therein, and then built the temple in Heliopolis. He begat a daughter Merris, whom he gave in marriage to a certain Chenephres [...] and she being not pregnant took a supposititious child from one of the Jews, and called him Mousos (Moses): but by the Greeks

he was called, when grown to manhood, Musaeus. And this Moses, they said, was the teacher of Orpheus; and when grown up he taught mankind many useful things.

Item 20 – Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.3-8

Transl. Gifford 1903a: 718-720 revised and edited by me

εἶτα μεταξύ τινὰ εἰπὼν ἐπιφέρει λέγων· “Δεῖ γὰρ λαμβάνειν τὴν θεῖαν φωνὴν οὐ ῥητὸν λόγον, ἀλλ’ ἔργων κατασκευάς, καθὼς καὶ διὰ τῆς νομοθεσίας ἡμῖν ὅλην τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ κόσμου θεοῦ λόγους εἶρηκεν ὁ Μωσῆς· συνεχῶς γὰρ φησιν ἐφ’ ἑκάστου· ‘Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός, καὶ ἐγένετο’. Δοκοῦσι δέ μοι περιειργασμένοι πάντα κατηκολουθηκέναι τούτῳ Πυθαγόρας τε καὶ Σωκράτης καὶ Πλάτων λέγοντες ἀκούειν φωνῆς θεοῦ, τὴν κατασκευὴν τῶν ὅλων συνθεωροῦντες ἀκριβῶς ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγονυῖαν καὶ συνεχομένην ἀδιαλείπτως. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ὅρφεὺς ἐν ποιήμασι τῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἱερὸν Λόγον αὐτῷ λεγομένων οὕτως ἐκτίθεται περὶ τοῦ διακρατεῖσθαι θεία δυνάμει τὰ πάντα καὶ γενητὰ ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων εἶναι τὸν θεόν. Λέγει δ’ οὕτως [...] Πᾶσι γὰρ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ὁμολογεῖται διότι δεῖ περὶ θεοῦ διαλήψεις ὁσίας ἔχειν, ὃ μάλιστα παρακελεύεται καλῶς ἢ καθ’ ἡμᾶς αἵρεσις. Ἡ δὲ τοῦ νόμου κατασκευὴ πᾶσα τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς περὶ εὐσεβείας τέτακται καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν”.

Then, after interposing some remarks, he further says: “For we must understand the voice of God not as words spoken, but as construction of works, just as Moses in the Law has spoken of the whole creation of the world as words of God. For he constantly says of each work, ‘And God said, and it was so’.

Now it seems to me that he has been very carefully followed in all by Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Plato, who said that they heard the voice of God, when they were contemplating the arrangement of the universe so accurately made and indissolubly combined by God. Moreover, Orpheus, in verses taken from his writings in the *Sacred Legend*, thus sets forth the doctrine that all things are governed by divine power, and that they have had a beginning, and that God is over all. And this is what he says: [...]. For all the philosophers agree, that we ought to hold pious opinions concerning God, and to this especially our system gives excellent exhortation; and the whole constitution of our law is arranged with reference to piety, and justice, and temperance, and all things else that are truly good”.

Item 21 – Theodoret, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* 1.85-87

Transl. Halton 2013: 36

δεῖ δὲ πρὸς τούτῳ καὶ τὰ πονηρὰ μαθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξελάσαι, εἴθ' οὕτως τὰ θεῖα προσδέξασθαι. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν ὁ Πλάτων ἐδίδαξεν εἰπών·

Οὐ καθαρῷ γὰρ καθαροῦ ἐφάπτεσθαι μὴ οὐ θεμιτὸν εἶναι.

Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ Ὀρφεὺς φησιν·

φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί, θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι. [...]

Τοῖς γὰρ ἀμύητοις πῶς ἂν τις προσενέγκοι τὰ θεῖα παιδεύματα; πῶς δ' ἂν μυηθεῖ τις, μὴ τῇ πίστει κρατύνας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ παρὰ τῶν διδασκάλων προσφερόμενα δόγματα; Πῶς δ' ἂν πιστεύσαι, μὴ πρότερον ἐξορίσας τῆς διανοίας τὰ κακῶς προεντεθέντα μαθήματα;

In addition to this it is necessary to expel false teachings from the soul and so receive divine teachings. That too was a teaching of Plato:

for one who is impure himself to attain the realm of purity
would no doubt be a breach of universal justice.

Orpheus says the same thing:

I will speak for those for whom it is legitimate; let the
profane ones close the doors. [...]

For how would anyone propose divine teachings to the uninitiated? How could one be initiated if he has not reinforced in himself by faith the doctrines which his teachers have proposed? How could one believe if he has not first eradicated from his thought erroneous teachings previously placed there?

Item 22 – *Tübingen Theosophy* 2.9

My translation

ὅτι ἐν πολλοῖς Φάνητα φερωνύμως ὁ Ὀρφεὺς προσαγορεύει τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ· οἷεται γὰρ αὐτῷ πρέπειν τὸ ὄνομα ὡς αἰδίως καὶ ἀοράτως πανταχοῦ φαίνοντι καὶ ὡς πᾶσι τὸ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων φανῆναι παρασχομένῳ. Μεμνημένος οὖν πολλαχῇ τοῦ μυθευομένου Διὸς καὶ τοῦ Διονύσου, ὃν Φάνητα προσαγορεύει, δημιουργὸν πάντων αὐτὸν εἰσάγει τὸν Φάνητα ὥσανεὶ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ υἱόν, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐφάνη. Διὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ ῥαψῳδίᾳ πρὸς Μουσαῖον οὕτω λέγει·

ταῦτα νόῳ πεφύλαξο, φίλον τέκος, ἐν πραπίδεςσιν
εἰδὼς περ μάλα πάντα παλαίφατα τὰπὸ Φάνητος.

In many passages Orpheus appropriately calls Phanes the only-begotten son of God. Indeed, he thinks that this name suits him as he is eternal and invisible, emanating light in all directions, making sure that the things that derive from non-being are visible to everyone. Then, often remembering Zeus about whom many myths are told, and Dionysus, whom he calls also Phanes, he makes him demiurge and creator of all things as he is son of God, thanks to whom all things were brought to light. And that is also why in the fourth *Rhapsody* he speaks thus to Musaeus:

these things I will guard in my mind, dear son, in my heart,
as I know that all these things are ancient and come from Phanes.

Chapter 3

Item 23 - The Orphic Hymn to Zeus

The Derveni Papyrus – Fr. 14 F

My translation

Ζεὺς πρῶτος [γένετο, Ζεὺς] ὕστατος [ἀργικέραυνος]
Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υ]κται·
[Ζεὺς πνοιή πάντων, Ζεὺς πάντων ἔπλετο] μοῖρα·
Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς δ' ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυνος.

Zeus was born first, Zeus is last, he of the bright lightning bolt;
Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle, and from Zeus everything is fashioned;
Zeus is the breath of all things, of all things is Zeus the fate;
Zeus the king, Zeus the ruler of all, he of the bright lightning bolt.

The *De mundo* version - Fr. 31 F (21-21a K.) = *De mundo* 7.401a 25

Transl. Thom 2014: 55

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένετο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀργικέραυνος·
Ζεὺς κεφαλὴ, Ζεὺς μέσσα· Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται·
Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.
Ζεὺς ἄρσην γένετο, Ζεὺς ἄμβροτος ἔπλετο νύμφη·
Ζεὺς πνοιή πάντων, Ζεὺς ἀκαμάτου πυρὸς ὁρμή·
Ζεὺς πόντου ρίζα· Ζεὺς ἥλιος ἡδὲ σελήνη.

5

Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυνος·
πάντας γὰρ κρύψας αὖθις φάος ἐς πολυγηθὲς
ἐκ ἱερῆς κραδίης ἀνενέγκατο, μέρμερα ῥέζων.

Zeus was born first, Zeus is last, ruler of the thunderbolt;
Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle; from Zeus all things are made;
Zeus is the foundation of earth and of starry heaven;
Zeus is a man, Zeus is an immortal maiden;
Zeus is the breath of all things, Zeus is the rush of tireless fire;
Zeus is the root of the sea, Zeus is the sun and moon;
Zeus is king, Zeus is ruler of all, ruler of the thunderbolt.
For having hidden all humans, again to the joyous light
he brought them up from his sacred¹²¹² heart, accomplishing baneful things.

The *Rhapsodies* version - Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.) = Eus. *Praep. Evang.* 3.8.2 = Porph. Fr. 354 F Smith
Transl. Gifford 1903: 109 revised and edited by me

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένετο, Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀργικέραυνος·
Ζεὺς κεφαλὴ, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται·
Ζεὺς ἄρσην γένετο, Ζεὺς ἄφθιτος ἔπλετο νύμφη·
Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος. 5
ἐν κράτος, εἷς δαίμων, γενέτης μέγας, ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων,
ἐν δὲ δέμας βασιλῆιον, ἐν ᾧ τάδε πάντα κυκλεῖται,
πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα καὶ αἰθήρ νύξ τε καὶ ἡμᾶρ
καὶ Μῆτις πρῶτος γενέτωρ καὶ Ἔρως πολυτερπής·
πάντα γὰρ ἐν μεγάλῳ Ζηνὸς τάδε σώματι κεῖται. 10
τοῦ δὴ τοι κεφαλὴ μὲν ἰδεῖν καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα
οὐρανὸς αἰγλήεις, ὃν χρύσειαι ἀμφὶς ἔθειραι
ἄστρον μαρμαρέων περικαλλέες ἠερέθονται,
ταύρεα δ' ἀμφοτέρωθε δύο χρύσεια κέρατα,
ἄντολιν τε δύσιν τε, θεῶν ὁδοὶ οὐρανόωνων, 15
ὄμματα δ' ἡέλιός τε καὶ ἀντιόωσα σελήνη·

¹²¹² My translation.

νοῦς δέ οἱ ἀψευδῆς βασιλῆιος ἄφθιτος αἰθήρ,
 ὧι δὴ πάντα κλύει καὶ φράζεται· οὐδέ τις ἐστὶν
 αὐδὴ οὐδ' ἐνοπὴ οὐδὲ κτύπος οὐδὲ μὲν ὅσσα,
 ἢ λήθει Διὸς οὔας ὑπερμενέος Κρονίωνος· 20
 ὧδε μὲν ἀθανάτην κεφαλὴν ἔχει ἡδὲ νόημα.
 σῶμα δέ οἱ περιφεγγές, ἀπείριτον, ἀστυφέλικτον,
 ἄτρομον, ὀβριμόγυιον, ὑπερμενὲς ὧδε τέτυκται·
 ὧμοι μὲν καὶ στέρνα καὶ εὐρέα νῶτα θεοῖο
 ἀήρ εὐρυβίης, πτέρυγες δέ οἱ ἐξεφύοντο, 25
 τῆς ἐπὶ πάντα ποτᾶθ', ἱερὴ δέ οἱ ἔπλετο νηδὺς
 γαῖά τε παμμήτωρ ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα·
 μέσση δὲ ζώνη βαρυηχέος οἶδμα θαλάσσης
 καὶ πόντου· πυμάτη δὲ βάσις, χθονὸς ἔνδοθι ρίζαι,
 Τάρταρά τ' εὐρώεντα καὶ ἔσχατα πείρατα γαίης. 30
 πάντα δ' ἀποκρύψας αὖθις φάος ἐς πολυγηθὲς
 μέλλεν ἀπὸ κραδῆς προφέρειν πάλι, θέσκελα ῥέζων.

Zeus was the first, Zeus last, the lightning's lord,
 Zeus head, Zeus centre, all things are from Zeus.
 Zeus born a male, Zeus virgin undefiled;
 Zeus the firm base of earth and starry heaven;
 Zeus sovereign, Zeus alone first cause of all:
 one power divine, great ruler of the world,
 one kingly form, encircling all things here,
 fire, water, earth, and ether, night and day;
 wisdom, first parent, and delightful Love:
 for in Zeus' mighty body these all lie.
 His head and beauteous face the radiant heaven
 reveals, and round him float in shining waves
 the golden tresses of the twinkling stars.
 On either side bulls' horns of gold are seen,
 sunrise and sunset, footpaths of the gods.
 His eyes the Sun, the Moon's responsive light;
 his mind immortal ether, sovereign truth,
 hears and considers all; nor any speech,

nor cry, nor noise, nor ominous voice escapes
the ear of Zeus, great Kronos' mightier son:
such his immortal head, and such his thought.
His radiant body, boundless, undisturbed
in strength of mighty limbs was formed thus:
the god's broad-spreading shoulders, breast, and back
air's wide expanse displays; on either side
grow wings, by which throughout all space he flies.
Earth the all-mother, with her lofty hills,
his sacred belly forms; the swelling flood
of hoarse resounding Ocean girds his waist.
His feet the deeply rooted ground upholds,
and dismal Tartarus, and earth's utmost bounds.
All things he hides, then from his heart again
in godlike action brings to gladsome light.

The Florentine papyrus version

Fr. 688a F = fr. 2, col. 1 Bastianini-Casanova

My translation

[Ὅρφέως]
[Ζεὺς] πάντων ἀρχή, Ζεὺς [μέσσα, Ζεὺς δε τε]λευτή·
Ζεὺς ὕπατος, [Ζεὺς καὶ χθόνι]ος καὶ πόντιος ἐστίν,
[Ζεὺς ἄρσην, Ζεὺς] θῆλυς
Ζεὺς δὲ [τὰ πάντα]
[πά]ντα κύκλῳ φαίνων, [Ζεὺς ἀρχή, μέσσα,] τ[ε]λευτή·
καὶ δύναται [Ζεὺς πᾶν, Ζεὺς π]ᾶ[ν] ἔχ<ε>ι αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Orpheus:

Zeus is the origin of all things, Zeus the middle, Zeus the end;
Zeus towering, Zeus is chthonic and marine,
Zeus male, Zeus female,
Zeus is all things
showing all things in circle, Zeus origin, middle, end;
and Zeus can do everything, everything he holds in himself.

Item 24 - Sources on fr. 416 (298 K.)

a. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 7.147 = SVF 2.1021

Transl. Miller 2018: 364

Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον λογικὸν τέλειον ἢ νοερὸν ἐν εὐδαιμονίᾳ, κακοῦ παντὸς ἀνεπίδεκτον, προνοητικὸν κόσμου τε καὶ τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ μὴ εἶναι μέντοι ἀνθρωπόμορφον. εἶναι δὲ τὸν μὲν δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων καὶ ὥσπερ πατέρα πάντων, κοινῶς τε καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ διήκον διὰ πάντων, ὃ πολλαῖς προσηγορίαις προσονομάζεται κατὰ τὰς δυνάμεις. Δία μὲν γάρ φασι δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα, Ζῆνα δὲ καλοῦσι παρ' ὅσον τοῦ ζῆν αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἢ διὰ τοῦ ζῆν κεχώρηκεν, Ἀθηνᾶν δὲ κατὰ τὴν εἰς αἰθέρα διάτασιν τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ αὐτοῦ, Ἥραν δὲ κατὰ τὴν εἰς ἀέρα καὶ Ἥφαιστον κατὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ τεχνικὸν πῦρ καὶ Ποσειδῶνα κατὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ ὑγρὸν καὶ Δήμητραν κατὰ τὴν εἰς γῆν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας προσηγορίας ἐχόμενοί τινος οἰκειότητος ἀπέδωκαν.

God is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect in happiness, immune to anything bad, exercising forethought for the cosmos and all it contains. But he is not of human shape. He is the craftsman of the universe and, as it were, the father of all things, both generally and in that particular part of him that pervades everything and which is called by many names in accordance with his various powers. For they call him Dia because he is the cause (*di'hon*) of all things; Zeus, insofar as he is the cause of life (*zēn*) or passes through the living; Athena because his ruling part extends into the upper air (*aithēr*); Hera because it extends into the air (*aēr*); Hephaestus because it extends into the designing fire; Poseidon because it extends into the watery domain; and Demeter because it extends into the earth. Likewise, they give him other titles by fastening onto particular aspects of his nature.

b. Plato, *Cratylus* 396 a-b

Transl. Reeve 1998: 23

φαίνεται δὲ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ λεγομένῳ τῷ Διὶ παγκάλως τὸ ὄνομα κεῖσθαι· ἔστι δὲ οὐ ῥάδιον κατανοῆσαι. ἀτεχνῶς γάρ ἐστιν οἶον λόγος τὸ τοῦ Διὸς ὄνομα· διελόντες δὲ αὐτὸ διχῇ οἱ μὲν τῷ ἑτέρῳ μέρει, οἱ δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ χρώμεθα· οἱ μὲν γὰρ 'Ζῆνα', οἱ δὲ 'Δία' καλοῦσιν· συντιθέμενα δ'εἰς ἓν δηλοῖ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ δὴ προσήκειν φαιμέν ὀνόματι οἷω τε εἶναι ἀπεργάζεσθαι. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἡμῖν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν ὅστις ἐστὶν αἴτιος μᾶλλον τοῦ ζῆν ἢ ὁ ἄρχων τε καὶ βασιλεὺς τῶν πάντων. συμβαίνει οὖν ὁρθῶς

ὀνομάζεσθαι οὗτος ὁ θεὸς εἶναι, δι' ὃν ζῆν ἀεὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει· διείληπται δὲ δίχα, ὥσπερ λέγω, ἔν ὃν τὸ ὄνομα, τῷ 'Διὶ' καὶ τῷ 'Ζηνί'. τοῦτον δὲ Κρόνου ὕὸν ὑβριστικὸν μὲν ἄν τις δόξειεν εἶναι ἀκούσαντι ἐξαίφνης, εὐλογον δὲ μεγάλης τινὸς διανοίας ἔκγονον εἶναι τὸν Δία· κόρον γὰρ σημαίνει οὐ παῖδα, ἀλλὰ τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ.

His [Tantalus'] father, who is said to have been Zeus, also seems to have had an altogether fine name given to him- but it isn't easy to figure out. That's because the name 'Zeus' is exactly like a phrase that we divide into two parts, 'Zêna' and 'Dia', some of us using one of them and some the other. But these two names, reunited into one, express the nature of the god-which is just what we said a name should do. Certainly, no one is more the cause of life (zên), whether for us or for anything else, than the ruler and king of all things. Thus 'Zêna' and 'Dia' together correctly name the god that is always the cause of life (di' hon zên) for all creatures. But, as I say, his name, which is really one, is divided into two, 'Dia' and 'Zêna'. When one hears that Zeus is the son of Kronos, one might find that offensive at first, and it might seem more reasonable to say that he is the offspring of a great intellect. But in fact Kronos' name signifies not a child (koros), but the purity and clarity of his intellect or understanding.

c. Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum* 99, 101

Transl. Duvick-Tarrant 2007: 54-57

διὸ δὴ καὶ Ὀρφεὺς δημιουργοῦντα μὲν αὐτὸν τὴν οὐρανίαν πᾶσαν γενεὰν παραδίδωσιν καὶ ἥλιον ποιοῦντα καὶ σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀστρώους θεοὺς, δημιουργοῦντα δὲ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα καὶ διακρίνοντα τοῖς εἶδεσιν ἀτάκτως ἔχοντα πρότερον, σειρὰς δ' ὑφιστάντα θεῶν περὶ ὅλον τὸν κόσμον εἰς αὐτὸν ἀνηρτημένας καὶ διαθεσμοθετοῦντα πᾶσι τοῖς ἐγκοσμίσις θεοῖς τὰς κατ' ἀξίαν διανομὰς τῆς ἐν τῷ παντὶ προνοίας. [...] χωριστὸς δ' ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος καὶ ἀφ' ὅλων ἐξηρημένος τῶν ἐγκοσμίων. [...] εἰκότως ἄρα καὶ τὸ ὄνομα διττὸν ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ, ὧν τὸ μὲν 'Δία' τὴν 'δι' οὐ' αἰτίαν δηλοῖ, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ πατρικὴ ἀγαθότης, τὸ δὲ 'Ζῆνα' τὴν 'ζωογονίαν', ὧν τὰς πρώτας ἐν τῷ παντὶ αἰτίας ὁ δημιουργὸς ἐνιαίως προείληφεν· καὶ ἔστι τὸ μὲν τῆς Κρονικῆς σειρᾶς καὶ πατρικῆς σύμβολον, τὸ δὲ τῆς ζωογόνου 'Ρέας καὶ μητρικῆς.

It is on this account, then, that Orpheus portrays him as the Demiurge of all the celestial generation together, the one who creates the sun, moon and the other astral gods, but also as the Demiurge of the elements under the moon, which he discriminates by means

of Forms from their previous disorderly state, as the one who institutes series, which depend on him, of gods around the cosmos as a whole, and as the one who decrees to all the encosmic gods the distributions, according to desert, of providence in the universe. [...] But Zeus is separate and transcendent over the encosmic realm as a whole. [...] It is therefore proper that his name is two-fold: while *Dia* reveals the cause ‘through which’ (*di’ hou*) [everything is created] –and this is his paternal Goodness– *Zêna* indicates his generation of living things (*zôogonia*). The Demiurge has uniformly anticipated the first Causes of these functions in the universe. The first name is a symbol of the Cronian and paternal series, the second of the life-generating Rhea and maternal series.

Item 25 - The Gurob papyrus, fr. 578 F (31 K.)

Transl. West 1983: 171 revised and edited by me

[ἔκ]αστα ἔ[χ]ων ἃ εὖρηι	
τὰ] ὠμὰ δὲ συνλεγέ[τω	
].. διὰ τὴν τελετήν.	
δῶρον δέξ[ατ' ἐμὸν ποινὰς πατ[έρων ἀθεμίστων.	
σῶισόν με Βριμῶ με[γάλη	5
Δημήτηρ τε Ῥέα [
Κούρητές τ' {ε} ἔνπλοι []ωμεν	7-8
ἵ]να ποιῶμεν ἱερὰ καλὰ	
] νηι κριός τε τράγος τε	10
] ἀπερ<ε>ίσια δῶρα.	
] ου καὶ ἐπὶ ποταμοῦ νομῶι	
λαμβ]άνων τοῦ τράγου	
] τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ κρέα ἐσθιέτω	
]ος μὴ ἐφοράτω	15
]χου ἀναθεῖς εἰς τὸ ἀνηρε[
]αλων εὐχή·	
]νον καὶ Εὐβουλῆα καλῶ[μεν	
]... εὐρήας κικλήσκω[μεν	
]... τε φίλους· συ ἀπαυάνας	20
Δ]ήμητρος καὶ Παλλάδος ἡμῖν	

I have drunk. Donkey. Oxherd
...Password: Up And Down To The
And what has been given to you, consume it
put it into the basket
[c]one, bull-roarer, knucklebones
.... mirror.

Chapter 4

Item 26 – *Orphic Hymn 15*

Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 16-17 revised and edited by me

Διός, θυμίαμα στύρακα.

Zeū πολυτίμητε, Zeū ἄφθιτε, τήνδε τοι ἡμεῖς
μαρτυρίαν τιθέμεσθα λυτήριον ἡδὲ πρόσευξιν.
ὦ βασιλεῦ, διὰ σὴν κεφαλὴν ἐφάνη τάδε θεῖα,
γαῖα θεὰ μήτηρ ὀρέων θ' ὑψηχέες ὄχθοι
καὶ πόντος καὶ πάνθ', ὅπόσ' οὐρανὸς ἐντὸς ἔταξε· 5
Zeū Κρόνιε, σκηπτοῦχε, καταιβάτα, ὀμβριμόθυμε,
παντογένηθλ', ἀρχὴ πάντων πάντων τε τελευτή,
σεισίχθων, αὐξητά, καθάρσιε, παντοτινάκτα,
ἀστραπαῖε, βρονταῖε, κεραύνιε, φυτάλιε Zeū·
κλυθί μου, αἰολόμορφε, δίδου δ' ὑγίειαν ἀμεμφῇ 10
εἰρήνην τε θεὰν καὶ πλούτου δόξαν ἄμεμπτον.

To Zeus, incense – storax

Much-honored Zeus, great god, indestructible Zeus,
we lay before you in prayer redeeming testimony.
O king, through your head you have brought to light divine works –
Earth, goddess and mother, the hills swept by the shrill winds,
the sea and the host of the stars, marshaled by the sky
Kronian Zeus, strong-spirited god, the thunderbolt is your sceptre,
father of all, beginning and end of all,

earth-shaker, increaser and purifier, all-shaker,
 god of thunder and lightning, Zeus the sower.
 Hear me, god of many faces, grant me unblemished health,
 please grant me divine peace and riches, please grant me glory without blame.

Item 27 – *Orphic Hymn 19*

Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 19-20 revised and edited by me

Κεραυνοῦ Διός, θυμίαμα στύρακα.

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ὑψίδρομον πυραυγέα κόσμον ἐλαύνων,
 στράπτων αἰθερίου στεροπῆς πανυπέρτατον αἴγλην,
 παμμακάρων ἔδρανον θείαις βρονταῖσι τινάσσων,
 νάμασι παννεφέλοις στεροπὴν φλεγέθουσας ἀναίθων,
 λαίλαπας, ὄμβρους, πρηστῆρας κρατερούς τε κεραυνούς, 5
 βάλλων † ἐς ῥοθίους φλογερούς, βελέεσσι καλύπτων
 παμφλέκτους, κρατερούς, φρικώδεις, ὀμβριμοθύμους,
 πτηνὸν ὄπλον δεινόν, κλονοκάρδιον, ὀρθοέθειρον,
 αἰφνίδιον, βρονταῖον, ἀνίκητον βέλος ἀγνόν,
 ῥοίζου ἀπειρεσίου δινεύμασι, παμφάγον ὀρμηῇ, 10
 ἄρρηκτον, βαρύθυμον, ἀμαιμάκετον πρηστῆρος
 οὐράνιον βέλος ὃξὺ καταιβάτου αἰθαλόεντος,
 ὃν καὶ γαῖα πέφρικε θάλασσά τε παμφανόωντα,
 καὶ θῆρες πτήσσουσιν, ὅταν κτύπος οὐᾶς ἐσέλθῃ·
 μαρμαίρει δὲ πρόσωπ' αὐγαῖς, σμαραγεῖ δὲ κεραυνὸς 15
 αἰθέρος ἐν γυάλοισι· διαρρήξας δὲ χιτῶνα
 οὐράνιον προκάλυμμα † βάλλεις ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν.
 ἀλλὰ, μάκαρ, θυμὸν [~~~~] κύμασι πόντου
 ἡδ' ὀρέων κορυφαῖσι· τὸ σὸν κράτος ἴσμεν ἅπαντες.
 ἀλλὰ χαρεῖς λοιβαῖσι δίδου φρεσὶν αἴσιμα πάντα 20
 ζωὴν τ' ὀλβιόθυμον, ὁμοῦ θ' ὑγίειαν ἄνασσαν
 εἰρήνην τε θεόν, κουροτρόφον, ἀγλαότιμον,
 καὶ βίον εὐθύμοισιν ἀεὶ θάλλοντα λογισμοῖς.

To Zeus the Thunderbolt

Incense-storax

Father Zeus, sublime is the course of the blazing cosmos you drive on,
ethereal and lofty the flash of your lightning
as you shake the seat of the gods with a god's thunderbolts.

The fire of your lightning emblazons the rain clouds,
you bring storms and hurricanes, you bring mighty gales,
you hurl roaring thunder, a shower of arrows.

Horrific might and strength sets all aflame, dreadful missile
Makes hearts pound and hair bristle.

Holy and invincible, it comes with sudden crash,
an endless spiral of noise, omnivorous in its drive,
unbreakable and threatening, ineluctable, too, the gale's
sharp and smoke-filled shafts swoop down
with a flash dreaded by land and sea.

Wild beasts cringe when they hear the noise,
faces reflect the brilliance of thunder roaring
in the celestial hollows. You tear the robe
That cloaks heaven, you hurl the fiery thunderbolt.

O blessed one... The anger of the sea waves,
the anger of the mountain peaks- we all know your power.
Enjoy this libation and give all things pleasing to the heart:
a life of prosperity, queenly health,
divine peace that nurtures youths, crowned with honors,
a life ever blooming with cheerful thoughts.

Item 28 – Philoponus, *On Aristotle De anima* 410b 27, 21-29

Transl. Van der Eijk 2006: 111

Τὸ αὐτὸ δὲ πέπονθε καὶ ὁ ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς καλουμένοις ἔπεσι λόγος. Λεγομένοις εἶπεν, ἐπειδὴ μὴ δοκεῖ Ὀρφέως εἶναι τὰ ἔπη, ὥς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς Περὶ φιλοσοφίας λέγει· αὐτοῦ μὲν γὰρ εἰσι τὰ δόγματα, ταῦτα δὲ φασιν Ὀνομάκριτον ἐν ἔπεσι κατατεῖναι. λέγει οὖν ἐκεῖ ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνέμων ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς φερομένη ἀναπνεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν ζώων. ὥστε καὶ οὗτος ὁ

λόγος οὐ περὶ πάσης ψυχῆς λέγει· οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἀναπνεῖ τὰ ἔμψυχα· οὐκ οὖν τὰ ἔντομα οὐδὲ τὰ φυτά.

The same thing is the case with the theory contained in the so-called Orphic poems. He says ‘so-called’, because it seems that these verses are not by Orpheus, as indeed <Aristotle> himself says in *On Philosophy*; for it is the doctrines that are Orpheus’, and they say that it was Onomacritus who put them in verse. He says there that the soul is carried from the universe by the winds and is breathed in by animals. Consequently, this doctrine, too, does not speak about all soul; for not all ensouled beings breathe: neither insects nor plants do.

Item 29 - *Orphic Hymn 20*

Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 21 revised and edited by me

Διὸς Ἀστραπαίου, θυμίαμα λιβανομάνναν.

Κικλήσκω μέγαν, ἄγνόν, ἔρισμαράγον, περίφαντον,
ἄέριον, φλογόεντα, πυρίδρομον, ἀεροφεγγῇ,
ἀστράπτοντα σέλας νεφέων παταγοδρόμωι αὐδῇι,
φρικώδη, βαρύμηνιν, ἀνίκητον θεὸν ἄγνόν,
ἀστραπαῖον Δία, παγγενέτην, βασιλῆα μέγιστον,
εὐμενέοντα φέρειν γλυκερὴν βιότοιο τελευτήν.

5

To Astrapaïos Zeus

Incense – powdered frankincense

I call upon great and pure, upon resounding and illustrious,
upon ethereal and blazing Zeus, whose racing fire shines through the air.
Your light flashes through the clouds with an ear-splitting clap.
O horrid, O wrathful and pure, O invincible god,
lord of lightning, I call upon you, O begetter of all, O great king,
to be kind and to bring a sweet end to my life.

Item 30– Strabo, *Geography* 9.2.11

Transl. Jones 1927: 293-295

καὶ ὁ Μυκαλησσὸς δὲ κώμη τῆς Ταναγραϊκῆς· κεῖται δὲ παρ’ ὁδὸν τὴν ἐκ Θηβῶν εἰς Χαλκίδα·
[...]. ὥς δ’ αὐτως καὶ τὸ Ἄρμα τῆς Ταναγραϊκῆς κώμη ἔρημος περὶ τὴν Μυκαλησσόν, ἀπὸ τοῦ

Ἀμφιαράου ἄρματος λαβοῦσα τοῦνομα, ἑτέρα οὔσα τοῦ Ἄρματος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ἀττικὴν, ὃ ἐστὶ περὶ Φυλὴν, δῆμον τῆς Ἀττικῆς ὁμορον τῇ Τανάγρα. ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἡ παροιμία τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔσχεν ἢ λέγουσα· ὁπότεν δι' Ἄρματος ἀστράψῃ· ἀστραπὴν τινα σημειουμένων κατὰ χρησμὸν τῶν λεγομένων Πυθαϊστῶν, βλεπόντων ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ Ἄρμα, καὶ τότε πεμπόντων τὴν θυσίαν εἰς Δελφοὺς, ὅταν ἀστράψαντα ἴδωσιν· ἐτήρουν δ' ἐπὶ τρεῖς μῆνας, καθ' ἕκαστον μῆνα ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσχάρας τοῦ ἀστραπαίου Διός· ἔστι δ' αὕτη ἐν τῷ τείχει μεταξὺ τοῦ Πυθίου καὶ τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου.

Also Mycalessus, a village, is in the Tanagraean territory. It is situated on the road that leads from Thebes to Chalcis; [...]. And Harma is likewise in the Tanagraean territory; it is a deserted village near Mycalessus, and received its name from the chariot of Amphiarāūs, and is a different place from the Harma in Attica, which is near Phylē, a deme of Attica bordering on Tanagra. Here originated the proverb, 'when the lightning flashes through Harma'; for those who are called the Pythaistae look in the general direction of Harma, in accordance with an oracle, and note any flash of lightning in that direction, and then, when they see the lightning flash, take the offering to Delphi. They would keep watch for three months, for three days and nights each month, from the altar of Zeus Astrapaeus; this altar is within the walls between the Pythium and the Olympium.

Item 31 – *Orphic Hymn 52*

Transl. Athanassakis-Wolkow 2013: 42-43

Τριετηρικοῦ, θυμίαμα ἀρώματα.

Κικλήσκω σε, μάκαρ, πολυώνυμε, † μανικέ, Βακχεῦ,
ταυρόκερως, ληναῖε, πυρίσπορε, Νύσιε, λυσεῦ,
μηροτρεφής, λικνῖτα, † πυριπόλε καὶ τελετάρχα,
νυκτέρι', Εὐβουλεῦ, μιτρηφόρε, θυρσοτινάκτα,
ὄργιον ἄρρητον, τριφυές, κρύφιον Διὸς ἔρνος,
πρωτόγον', Ἑρικεπαῖε, θεῶν πάτερ ἡδὲ καὶ υἱέ,
ὠμάδιε, σκηπτοῦχε, χοροϊμανές, ἀγέτα κώμων,
βακχεύων ἀγίας τριετηρίδας ἀμφὶ γαληνάς,
ῥηξίχθων, πυριφεγγές, † ἐπάφριε, κοῦρε διμάτωρ,
οὔρεσιφοῖτα, κερῶς, νεβριδοστόλε, ἀμφιέτηρε,
Παιὰν χρυσεγχής, † ὑποκόλπιε, βοτρυνόκοσμε,
Βάσσαρε, κισσοχαρής, † πολυπάρθενε καὶ διάκοσμε †

5

10

ἐλθέ, μάκαρ, μύσταισι βρύων κεχαρημένος αἰεί.

To the God of Triennial Feasts

Incense – aromatic herbs

I call upon you, blessed, many-named, frenzied Bacchos,
bull-horned, Nysian, Lysios, Lenaïos, conceived in fire.
Nourished in the thigh, Liknites, you lead torch-lit processions,
you lead them in the light, O filleted, O thyrsos-shaking Eubouleus.
Your nature three-fold, your rites ineffable, O secret offspring of Zeus,
primeval, Erikepaïos, father and son of the gods,
you take raw flesh, and sceptered you lead us into the madness of revel and dance,
into the frenzy of triennial feasts, that bestow calm on us.
You burst forth from the earth in a blaze..., O son of two mothers,
horned and clad in fawn skin, you roam the mountains, O lord worshipped in annual feasts.
Paian of the golden spear, nursling, decked with grapes,
bassaros, exulting in ivy, followed by many maidens...,
joyous and all-abounding, come, O blessed one, to the initiates.

Chapter 5

Item 32 – Aristobulus, fragment 4 = Eus. *Praep. Ev.* 13.12.3-8

Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719-721 revised and edited by me

Δεῖ γὰρ λαμβάνειν τὴν θεῖαν φωνὴν οὐ ῥητὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἔργων κατασκευάς, καθὼς καὶ διὰ τῆς νομοθεσίας ἡμῖν ὅλην τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ κόσμου θεοῦ λόγους εἴρηκεν ὁ Μωσῆς. συνεχῶς γὰρ φησιν ἐφ' ἐκάστου· 'καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός, καὶ ἐγένετο'. δοκοῦσι δέ μοι περιειργασμένοι πάντα κατηκολουθηκέναι τούτῳ Πυθαγόρας τε καὶ Σωκράτης καὶ Πλάτων λέγοντες ἀκούειν φωνῆς θεοῦ, τὴν κατασκευὴν τῶν ὅλων συνθεωροῦντες ἀκριβῶς ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγонуῖαν καὶ συνεχομένην ἀδιαλείπτως. ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ὀρφεὺς ἐν ποιήμασι τῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἱερὸν Λόγον αὐτῶ λεγομένων οὕτως ἐκτίθεται περὶ τοῦ διακρατεῖσθαι θεία δύναμις τὰ πάντα καὶ γενητὰ ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων εἶναι τὸν θεόν. λέγει δ' οὕτως [...] καὶ Ἄρατος δὲ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν φησιν οὕτως·

Ἐκ θεοῦ ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἑῶσιν
ἄρρητον· μεστὰ δὲ θεοῦ πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαί,

πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί, μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα
καὶ λιμένες, πάντα δὲ θεοῦ κεκρήμεθα πάντες.
τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν· ὁ δ' ἥπιος ἀνθρώποισι
δεξιὰ σημαίνει, λαοὺς δ' ἐπὶ ἔργον ἐγείρει
μιμνήσκων βιότοιο· λέγει δ' ὅτε βῶλος ἀρίστη
βουσί τε καὶ μακέλῃσι, λέγει δ' ὅτε δεξιαὶ ὥραι
καὶ φυτὰ γυρῶσαι καὶ σπέρματα πάντα βαλέσθαι.

σαφῶς οἶομαι δεδεῖχθαι διότι διὰ πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ. καθὼς δὲ δεῖ, σεσημάγκαμεν περιαιροῦντες τὸν διὰ τῶν ποιημάτων 'Δία καὶ Ζῆνα'· τὸ γὰρ τῆς διανοίας αὐτῶν ἐπὶ θεὸν ἀναπέμπεται, διόπερ οὕτως ἡμῖν εἴρηται. οὐκ ἀπεικίτως οὖν τοῖς ἐπεζητημένοις προενηνέγμεθα ταῦτα. πᾶσι γὰρ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ὁμολογεῖται διότι δεῖ περὶ θεοῦ διαλήψεις ὁσίας ἔχειν, ὃ μάλιστα παρακελεύεται καλῶς ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς αἵρεσις. ἡ δὲ τοῦ νόμου κατασκευὴ πᾶσα τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς περὶ εὐσεβείας τέτακται καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν.

For we must understand the voice of God not as words spoken, but as construction of works, just as Moses in the Law has spoken of the whole creation of the world as words of God. For he constantly says of each work, 'And God said, and it was so'.

Now it seems to me that he has been very carefully followed in all by Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Plato, who said that they heard the voice of God, when they were contemplating the arrangement of the universe so accurately made and indissolubly combined by God. Moreover, Orpheus, in verses taken from his writings in the Sacred Legend, thus sets forth the doctrine that all things are governed by divine power, and that they have had a beginning, and that God is over all. And this is what he says: [...].

Aratus also speaks of the same subject thus:

From Zeus begin the song, nor ever leave
his name unsung, whose godhead fills all streets,
all thronging marts of men, the boundless sea
and all its ports: whose aid all mortals need;
for we his offspring are; and kindly he
reveals to man good omens of success,
stirs him to labour by the hope of food,
tells when the land best suits the grazing ox,
or when the plough; when favouring seasons bid
plant the young tree, and sow the various seed.

It is clearly shown, I think, that all things are pervaded by the power of God: and this I have properly represented by taking away the name of Zeus which runs through the poems; for it is to God that their thought is sent up, and for that reason I have so expressed it. These quotations, therefore, which I have brought forward are not inappropriate to the questions before us. For all the philosophers agree, that we ought to hold pious opinions concerning God, and to this especially our system gives excellent exhortation; and the whole constitution of our law is arranged with reference to piety, and justice, and temperance, and all things else that are truly good.

Item 33 – The text of the *Hieros Logos*: fr. 378 F (247 K.)

Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719-720, revised and edited by me

Φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί, θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι,
 φεύγοντες δικαίων θεσμούς, θείοιο τιθέντος
 πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ· σὺ δ' ἄκουε, φαεσφόρου ἔκγονε Μήνης
 Μουσαί'. ἔξενέπω γάρ ἀληθέα· μηδέ σε τὰ πρὶν
 ἐν στήθεσσι φανέντα φίλης αἰωνος ἀμέρσῃ, 5
 εἰς δὲ λόγον θεῖον βλέψας τούτῳ προσέδρευε,
 ἰθύνων κραδίης νοερὸν κύτος· εὖ δ' ἐπίβαινε
 ἄτραπιτοῦ, μῦνον δ' ἐσώρα κόσμοιο τυπωτὴν¹²¹³
 ἀθάνατον. παλαιὸς δὲ λόγος περὶ τοῦδε φαίνει·
 εἷς ἔστ' αὐτοτελής,¹²¹⁴ αὐτοῦ δ' ὕπο πάντα τελεῖται.¹²¹⁵ 10
 ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιníσσεται,¹²¹⁶ οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
 εἰσοράαι ψυχὴν θνητῶν, νῶι δ' εἰσοράεται.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐξ ἀγαθῶν θνητοῖς κακὸν οὐκ ἐπιτέλλει
 ἀνθρώποις· αὐτοῖς δὲ κῆρις καὶ μῖσος ὀπηδεῖ·
 καὶ πόλεμος καὶ λοιμὸς ἰδ' ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα· 15
 οὐδέ τις ἐσθ' ἕτερος. σὺ δὲ κεν ῥέα πάντ' ἐσορήσω,
 αἷ κεν ἴδῃς αὐτόν· πρὶν δὴ ποτε δεῦρ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν,
 τέκνον ἐμόν, δείξω σοι, ὀπηνίκα {τὰ} δέρκομαι αὐτοῦ

¹²¹³ 'ἄνακτα' in *De mon.* 2.4, *Coh. Gr.* 15.1, *Clem. Protr.* 74 and *Strom.* 5.14.123-4.

¹²¹⁴ 'αὐτογενής' in *De mon.* 2.4, *Coh. Gr.* 15.1, *Clem. Protr.* 74 and the *Tübingen Theosophy*.

¹²¹⁵ 'τέτυκται' in *De mon.* 2.4, *Coh. Gr.* 15.1, *Clem. Protr.* 74 and the *Tübingen Theosophy*.

¹²¹⁶ 'περιγίνεται' in *De mon.* 2.4 and *Coh. Gr.* 15.1.

ἴχνια καὶ χεῖρα στιβαρὴν κρατεροῖο θεοῖο.
 αὐτὸν δ' οὐχ ὁρώω· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται¹²¹⁷ 20
 λοιπὸν ἐμοί· 'στᾶσιν δὲ δεκάπτυχον ἀνθρώποισιν.
 οὐ γὰρ κέν τις ἴδοι θνητῶν μερόπων κραίνοντα,
 εἰ μὴ μουνογενῆς τις ἀπορρώξ φύλου ἄνωθεν
 Χαλδαίων· ἴδρις γὰρ ἔην ἄστροιο πορείης
 καὶ σφαίρης κίνημ' ἀμφὶ χθόνα ὥς περιτέλλει, 25
 κυκλοτερὴς ἐν ἴσῳ τε κατὰ σφέτερον κνώδακα.
 πνεύματι δ' ἠνιοχεῖ περὶ τ' ἡέρα καὶ περὶ χεῦμα
 νάματος· ἐκφαίνει δὲ πυρὸς σέλα † τα δε ἱφι γεννηθῇ †.
 αὐτὸς δὴ μέγαν αὖθις ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται
 χρυσέῳ εἰνὶ θρόνῳ· γαίῃ δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ βέβηκε· 30
 χεῖρα δὲ δεξιτερὴν ἐπὶ τέρμασιν Ὠκεανοῖο
 ἐκτέτακεν· ὁρέων δὲ τρέμει βάσις ἔνδοθι θυμῷ
 οὐδὲ φέρειν δύναται κρατερὸν μένος· ἔστι δὲ πάντη
 αὐτὸς ἐπουράνιος καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάντα τελευταῖ,
 ἀρχὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μέσσον ἡδὲ τελευτήν. 35
 ὥς λόγος ἀρχαίων, ὥς ὕδογενῆς διέταξεν,
 ἐκ θεόθεν γνώμησι λαβὼν κατὰ δίπλακα θεσμόν.
 ἄλλως οὐ θεμιτὸν σὲ λέγειν· τρομέω δέ γε γυῖα·
 ἐν νόῳ ἐξ ὑπάτου κραίνει περὶ πάντ' ἐνὶ τάξει.
 ὦ τέκνον, σὺ δὲ τοῖσι νόοισι πελάζευ † μηδ' ἄπο γε † < ... > 40
 εὖ μάλ' ἐπικρατέων, στέρνοισι δὲ ἔνθεω φήμην.

I speak to those who lawfully may hear:
 close the doors, all you profane,
 who hate the ordinances of the just,
 the law divine announced to all mankind.
 But you, Musaeus, child of the bright Moon,
 lend me your ear; for I have truths to tell.
 Let not the former whims of your mind

¹²¹⁷ Three lines are here added in the Urfassung version of the text (fr. 377 [245 K.], 15-16): “πασιν γὰρ θνητοῖς θνητάί κόραι εἰσὶν ἐν οσσοῖς, / μικραί, ἐπεὶ σάρκες τε καὶ οστέα ἐμπεφύασιν, / ἀσθενέες δ' ἰδέειν δια πάντων τον μεδέοντα”. “Δία τον πάντων μεδέοντα” is found in *Coh. Gr.* 15.1 instead of “δια πάντων τον μεδέοντα”.

deprive you of the dear and blessed life.
Look to the word divine, keep close to that,
and guide thereby the deep thoughts of your heart.
Walk wisely in the way, and look to none,
save to the immortal Framer of the world:
for thus of Him an ancient story speaks:
one, perfect in Himself, all else by Him
made perfect: ever present in His works,
by mortal eyes unseen, by mind alone
discerned. It is not He that out of good
makes evil to spring up for mortal men.
Both love and hatred accompany Him,
and war and pestilence, and sorrow and tears:
for there is none but He. All other things
you would easily see, if you could see Him;
but first here upon earth
whenever I see the footsteps and the mighty hand of God
I'll show them to you, my son:
but Him I cannot see, so dense a cloud
in tenfold darkness wraps mortal men.
Him in His power no mortal could behold,
save one, a scion of Chaldean race:
for he was skilled to mark the sun's bright path,
and how in even circle round the earth
the starry sphere on its own axis turns,
and winds their chariot guide over sea and sky;
and showed where fire's bright flame its strength displayed.
But God Himself, high above heaven unmoved,
sits on His golden throne, and plants His feet
on the earth; His right hand He extends
over Ocean's farthest bound; the hills
tremble in their deep heart, nor can endure
His mighty power. And still above the heavens
alone He sits, and governs all on earth,

Himself first cause, and means, and end of all.
So men of old, so tells the water-born sage,
taught by the twofold tablet of God's law;
nor otherwise it is possible of Him to speak:
in limbs I tremble at the thought,
how He from the highest place all things in order rules.
Draw near in thought, my son; but guard your tongue
with care, and store this doctrine in your heart.

Item 34 – The divine epithet of ‘most high’

a. Genesis 14, 22

Transl. Pietersma-Wright 2009: 14 in the NETS (New English Translation of the Septuagint)

Εἶπεν δὲ Ἀβραμ πρὸς τὸν Βασιλέα Σοδόμων· ἐκτενῶ τὴν χεῖρά μου πρὸς Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν τὸν ὕψιστον, ὃς ἔκτισε τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I will extend my hand to God Most High, who created the sky and the earth”.

b. Philo, *Legum Allegoriae* 3.24

Transl. Colson-Whitaker 1981: 317

Καθάπερ καὶ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ Σοδόμων βασιλεῖ τεχνάζοντι ἀλόγου φύσεως ποιήσασθαι ἀντίδοσιν πρὸς λογικὴν, ἵππου πρὸς ἄνδρα, φησὶ μηδὲν λήψεσθαι τῶν ἐκείνου, ἀλλ’ ἐκτενεῖν τὴν ψυχικὴν πρᾶξιν, ὅπερ διὰ συμβόλου ‘χεῖρα’ ὠνόμασε, ‘πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὸν ὕψιστον’.

In like manner when the king of Sodom is artfully attempting to effect an exchange of creatures without reason for reasonable beings, of horses for men, Abraham says that he will take none of the things that are his but will ‘stretch out’ his soul’s operation, which he figuratively called his ‘hand’, ‘to the Most High God’.

c. Philo, *De Ebrietate* 105

Transl. Colson-Withaker 1968: 373

Οὕτως τὸν σοφὸν Ἀβραάμ [...], εἰσάγει τὸν εὐχαριστητικὸν ὕμνον ἐξάρχοντα καὶ φάσκοντα ταυτί: “ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὸν ὑψίστον, ὃς ἔκτισε τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν [...]”.

Thus wise Abraham [...], is represented as raising the hymn of thanksgiving in these words: “I will stretch forth my hand to the most high God who made heaven and earth [...]”.

d. *De mundo* 6.397b 24-27

Transl. Thom 2014: 43

Τὴν μὲν οὖν ἄνωτάτῳ καὶ πρώτῃν ἔδραν αὐτὸς ἔλαχεν, ὑπατός’ τε διὰ τοῦτο ὠνόμασται, κατὰ τὸν ποιητὴν “ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ” τοῦ σύμπαντος ἐγκαθιδρυμένος οὐρανοῦ·

He has been allotted the highest and first place, and is therefore called supreme, established according to the poet ‘on the highest peak’ of the whole heaven.

Item 35 – Aristobulus and the *De mundo*

a. Fr. 243 F (69+168 K.), 4-7

Transl. Gifford 1903a: 109 revised and edited by me

Ζεὺς πυθμὴν γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
Ζεὺς βασιλεὺς, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένηθλος.
ἓν κράτος, εἷς δαίμων, γενέτης μέγας, ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων,
ἓν δὲ δέμας βασιλείον, ἐν ᾧ τάδε πάντα κυκλεῖται [...].

Zeus sovereign, Zeus alone first cause of all:
one power divine, great ruler of the world,
one kingly form, encircling all things here,
fire, water, earth, and ether, night and day;

b. Fr. 378 F (247 K.), 10-12; 20-21

Transl. Gifford 1903b: 719 revised and edited by me

εἷς ἔστ’ αὐτοτελής, αὐτοῦ δ’ ὕπο πάντα τελεῖται·
ἐν δ’ αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περινίσσεται, οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
εἰσοράαι ψυχὴν θνητῶν, νῶι δ’ εἰσοράεται. [...]
αὐτὸν δ’ οὐχ ὁρώω· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται
λοιπὸν ἐμοί· ἵστασιν δὲ δεκάπτυχον ἀνθρώποισιν.

One, perfect in Himself, all else by Him
made perfect: ever present in His works,
by mortal eyes unseen, by mind alone
discerned. [...]

But Him I cannot see, so dense a cloud
in tenfold darkness wraps mortal men.

c. *De mundo* 6.397b, 13-27

Transl. Thom 2014: 43

Ἀρχαῖος μὲν οὖν τις λόγος καὶ πατριός ἐστι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ πάντα καὶ διὰ θεὸν συνέστηκεν, οὐδεμία δὲ φύσις αὐτὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐστὶν αὐτάρκης, ἐρημωθεῖσα τῆς ἐκ τούτου σωτηρίας. Διὸ καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν εἰπεῖν τινες προήχθησαν ὅτι πάντα ταῦτά ἐστι θεῶν πλέα τὰ καὶ δι' ὀφθαλμῶν ἰνδαλλόμενα ἡμῖν καὶ δι' ἀκοῆς καὶ πάσης αἰσθήσεως, τῇ μὲν θείᾳ δυνάμει πρέποντα καταβαλλόμενοι λόγον, οὐ μὴν τῇ γε οὐσίᾳ. Σωτὴρ μὲν γὰρ ὄντως ἀπάντων ἐστὶ καὶ γενέτωρ τῶν ὅπωςδὴποτε κατὰ τόνδε τὸν κόσμον συντελουμένων ὁ θεός, οὐ μὴν αὐτουργοῦ καὶ ἐπιπόνου ζώου κάματον ὑπομένων, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει χρώμενος ἀτρύτῳ, δι' ἧς καὶ τῶν πόρρω δοκούντων εἶναι περιγίνεται. Τὴν μὲν οὖν ἀνωτάτῳ καὶ πρώτῃν ἔδραν αὐτὸς ἔλαχεν, ὑπατός τε διὰ τοῦτο ὠνόμασται, κατὰ τὸν ποιητὴν 'ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ' τοῦ σύμπαντος ἐγκαθιδρυμένος οὐρανοῦ [...].

There is indeed an ancient account, native to all people, that all things have come into existence from god and because of god, and that no thing by itself is self-sufficient, if deprived of the preservation deriving from him. Therefore some of the ancients were also led to say that all these things that appear to us through the eyes and hearing and every sensation are full of gods, presenting an idea appropriate to the divine power, not however to the divine essence. For god is really the preserver of all things and the begetter of everything however it is brought about in this cosmos, without indeed enduring the hardship of a creature hard at work for itself, but by making use of an untiring power, by means of which he prevails even over things that seem to be far away. He has been allotted the highest and first place, and is therefore called supreme, established according to the poet 'on the highest peak' of the whole heaven.

d. *De mundo* 6.399b, 19-25

Transl. Thom 2014: 49

ταῦτα χρή καὶ περὶ θεοῦ διανοεῖσθαι, δυνάμει μὲν ὄντος ἰσχυροτάτου, κάλλει δὲ εὐπρεπεστάτου, ζωῇ δὲ ἀθανάτου, ἀρετῇ δὲ κρατίστου, διότι πάσῃ θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων θεωρεῖται. τὰ γὰρ πάθη, καὶ τὰ δι' ἀέρος ἅπαντα καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τὰ ἐν ὕδατι, θεοῦ λέγοντ' ἂν ὄντως ἔργα εἶναι τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐπέχοντος [...].

This one should also think about god, who is strongest in power, fairest in beauty, immortal in life, outstanding in excellence; because, though he cannot be seen by any mortal being, he is seen from the works themselves. For it could be truly said that all that take place in the air and on land and in water are the works of god who has power over the cosmos.

e. *De mundo* 6.400a, 3-9

Transl. Thom 2014: 51

τοῦτον οὖν ἔχει τὸν λόγον ὁ θεὸς ἐν κόσμῳ, συνέχων τὴν τῶν ὅλων ἀρμονίαν τε καὶ σωτηρίαν, πλὴν οὔτε μέσος ὢν, ἔνθα ἡ γῆ τε καὶ ὁ θολερὸς τόπος οὗτος, ἀλλ' ἄνω καθαρὸς ἐν καθαρῷ χωρῷ βεβηκώς, ὃν ἐτύμως καλοῦμεν οὐρανὸν μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅρον εἶναι τὸν ἄνω, Ὀλυμπον δὲ οἷον ὀλοαμπῇ τε καὶ παντὸς ζόφου καὶ ἀτάκτου κινήματος κεχωρισμένον, [...].

This is the relationship god then has to the cosmos, maintaining the harmony and preservation of the universe, except that he is not in the centre, where the earth is, this turbid place, but he is above, pure in a pure region, which we in truth call heaven because the area above is the limit, and Olympus because it is shining all over and is removed from all gloom and disorderly motion, [...].

Item 36 – *De mundo* 2.392a, 16-23 and 31-34; 392b, 5-8

Transl. Thom 2014: 23-25

Τὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἀπλανῶν πλῆθος ἀνεξεύρετόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις, καίπερ ἐπὶ μιᾷς κινουμένων ἐπιφανείας τῆς τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ· τὸ δὲ τῶν πλανήτων, εἰς ἑπτὰ μέρη κεφαλαιούμενον, ἐν τοσοῦτοις, ἐστὶ κύκλοις ἐφεξῆς κειμένοις, ὥστε αἰετὸν τὸν ἀνωτέρω μείζω τοῦ ὑποκάτω εἶναι, τοὺς τε ἑπτὰ ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐμπεριέχεσθαι, πάντας γε μὴν ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀπλανῶν σφαίρας περιειληφθαι. [...] Μετὰ δὲ τὴν αἰθέριον καὶ θείαν φύσιν, ἥντινα τεταγμένην ἀποφαίνομεν, ἔτι δὲ ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀνετεροίωτον καὶ ἀπαθῆ, συνεχῆς ἐστιν ἢ δι' ὅλων παθητῇ τε καὶ τρεπτῇ,

καί, τὸ σύμπαν εἰπεῖν, φθαρτή τε καὶ ἐπίκηρος. [...] Ἐξῆς δὲ ταύτης ὁ ἀήρ ὑποκέχυται, ζοφώδης ὦν καὶ παγετώδης τὴν φύσιν· ὑπὸ δὲ ἐκείνης λαμπόμενος ἅμα καὶ διακαιόμενος λαμπρός τε γίνεται καὶ ἀλεεινός.

The number of fixed stars, then, cannot be discovered by humans, although they move on one visible surface, that of the whole heaven. The multitude of planets, on the other hand, grouped into seven parts, is [placed] in just as many circles located next to one another, so that the higher circle is always larger than the one below it, and so that the seven circles are contained within one another, but all [seven] are again surrounded by the sphere of fixed stars. [...] After the etherial and divine element, which we declare well-ordered, and furthermore inflexible, unchangeable and impassive, there immediately follows that which throughout is subject to change and alteration, and, in a word, destructible and perishable. [...] Next to this, the air is spread out below, opaque and ice-cold in nature. But when it is illuminated and at the same time heated by the former element, it becomes bright and warm.

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